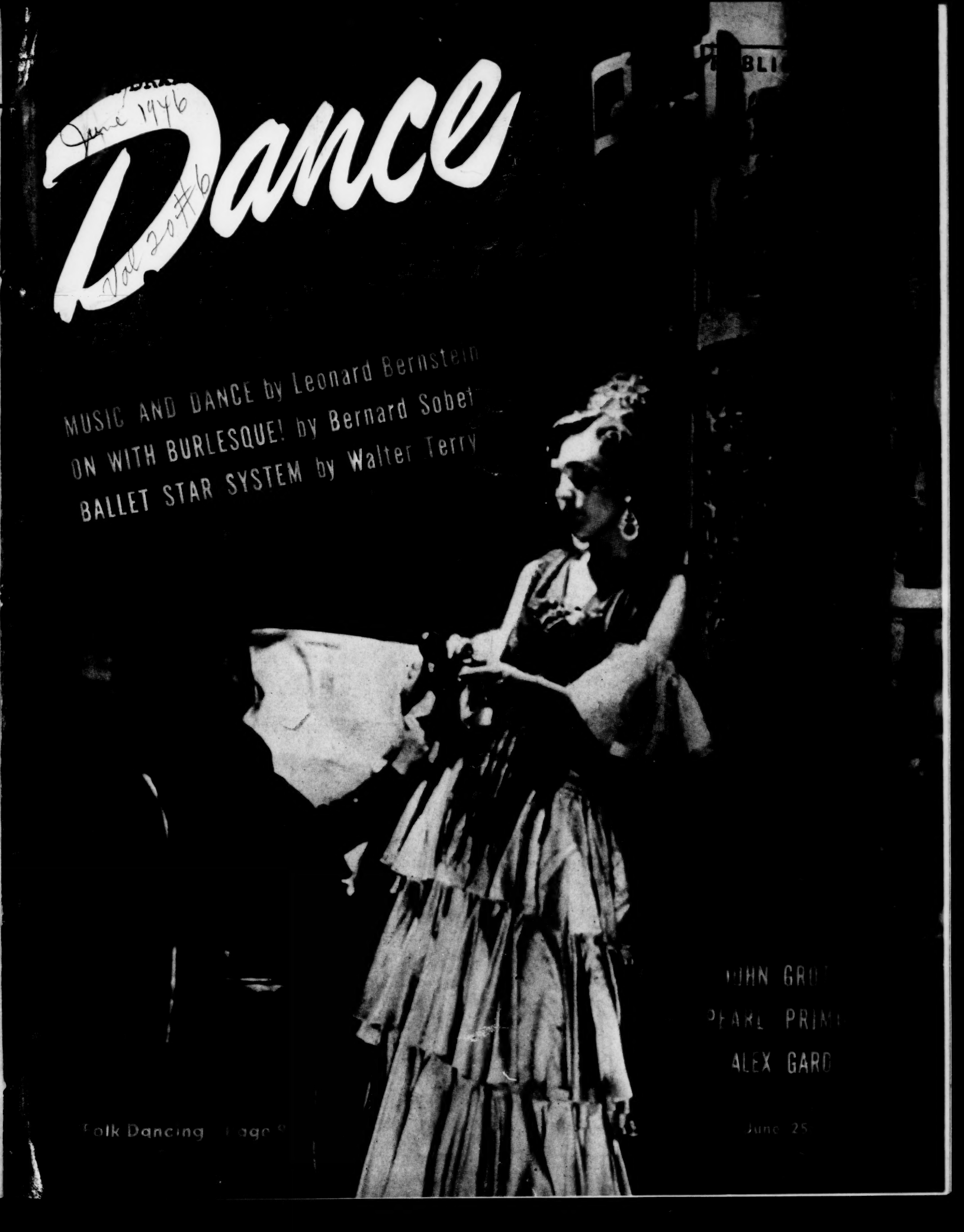
Dance

June 1946
Vol 20 #6

MUSIC AND DANCE by Leonard Bernstein
ON WITH BURLESQUE! by Bernard Sobel
BALLET STAR SYSTEM by Walter Terry



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Folk Dancing Page 9

June 25

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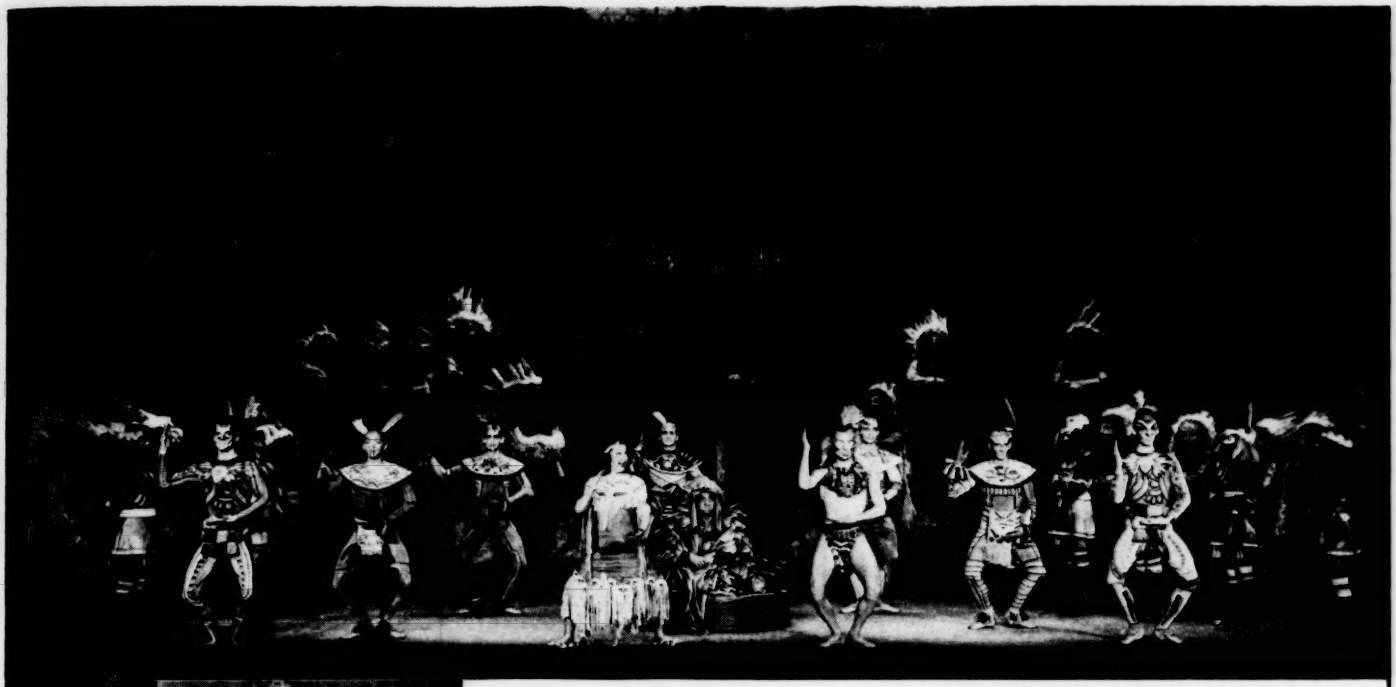

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Dance CALENDAR

JUNE

Recitals

NEW YORK

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. Central Park West and 79th St.
June 6. Native Hawaiian dancers.

BARBIZON PLAZA CONCERT HALL. 6th Ave and 58th St.
"Barbizon Tuesdays" series.
June 11. Spanish Classic with Maria Teresa Acuna and Federico Rey.
June 18. Blues Tuesday with Felicia Sorel and Dr. Sigmund Spaeth.
June 25. Valerie Bettis and Company.

ETHNOLOGIC DANCE CENTER, 110 E. 59th St.
June 6. Trudy Goth, Henry Shwarze and pupils present three new ballets.

ST. FELIX THEATRE, 126 St. Felix St., Brooklyn.
June 9. Ballet recital. Pupils of Eafim Geersh.

MANHATTAN CENTER, 311 W. 34th St.
June 2. All Nations Festival. Folk dance groups.

YMHA, 92nd St. and Lexington Ave.
June 16. Pearl Primus and group. Gordon Heath narrates.

Musicals

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, Imperial Theatre.
New "cowgirl" musical with Lubov Roudenko and Daniel Nagrin. Choreography by Helen Tamiris. Music by Irving Berlin.

ARE YOU WITH IT? Shubert Theatre.
A carnival setting for Joan Roberts, Lew Parker, Johnny Downs.

AROUND THE WORLD, Adelphi Theatre.
Orson Welles—Cole Porter musical with Arthur Margetson, Mary Healy, Julie Warren and Larry Laurence. Choreography by Nelson Barclift.

BILLION DOLLAR BABY, Alvin Theatre.
The roaring 20's. Dances by Jerome Robbins. Virginia Gorski replaces Joan McCracken on June 10th.

CALL ME MISTER, National Theatre.
Revue about ex GIs with dances by John Wray for Maria Karnilova, David Nillo and cast. Music by Harold Rome delivered by Betty Garret and Lawrence Winters.

CAROUSEL, Majestic Theatre.
The New England version of Liliom with Bambi Lynn in de Mille's dances.

ICE PARADE, Center Theatre.
Opening scheduled for June 20th. Sonja Henie—Arthur Wirtz show with choreography by Catherine Littlefield.

LUTE SONG, Plymouth Theatre.
Lavish setting for a Chinese classic. Choreography by Yeichi Nimura.

OKLAHOMA, St. James Theatre.
Now three years old. Agnes de Mille's dances.

SHOW BOAT, Ziegfeld Theatre.
Pearl Primus and Claude Marchant dance to Jerome Kern's muic.

SONG OF NORWAY, Broadway Theatre.
Operetta based on Grieg's life and music. Dorothie Littlefield dances.

ST. LOUIS WOMAN, Martin Beck Theatre.
Negro life in St. Louis during the gay 90's with the Nicholas Brothers. Pearl Bailey sings.

THE RED MILL, 46th St. Theatre.
Victor Herbert's famous musical. Eddie Foy, Jr. stars.

THE DANCER, Biltmore Theatre.
Opens June 5th. Anton Dolin stars in this story of a mad dancer.

THREE TO MAKE READY, Belasco Theatre.
A revue starring Ray Bolger with Harold Lang and Jane Deering.

Night Clubs

BOWMAN ROOM, Hotel Biltmore. Lathrop and Lee, dance stylists.

COPACABANA. Desi Arnaz, Paul and Eva Reyes.

CAFE SOCIETY UPTOWN. Beatrice Kraft, oriental dance stylists.

GLASS HAT, Belmont Plaza. Kathryn Duffy dancers in Cavalcade of Rhythm with Frances Matone, Jeanne Isner and Claire Reese.

LATIN QUARTER. "This is New York" revue with Penny Edwards.

STARLIGHT ROOF, Waldorf Astoria. Opens June 10th with Mischa Borr and his tango-rumba band.

Movie Houses

ASTOR. The Kid from Brooklyn, starring Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen.

CAPITOL. Two Sisters from Boston with dancing by June Allyson and Jimmy Durante. Miriam Lavelle on stage.

GLOBE. Make Mine Music, ballet sequences with Tatiana Riabouchinska and David Lichine.

LOEW'S STATE. On stage: Pat Rooney.

PARAMOUNT. On stage: Larry Storch and The Four Evans in a Generation of the Dance.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL. On stage: "The Kingdom of the Sea," underwater ballet, and "Metropolis."

Folk Dancing

AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP, 1657 B'way. 2nd and 4th Saturdays 8:30-11 p.m.

ARLINGTON HALL, 19 St. Johns Place. Wednesdays 8-11 p.m.

CITY FOLK DANCE SOCIETY, 9 E. 59 st. Saturdays 9-11 p.m.

COMMUNITY FOLK DANCE CENTER, Arlington Hall, 9 St. Marks Place. Tuesdays and Fridays 8:30-11:30 p.m.

COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY, Dalcroze School of Music, 130 W. 56 St. Thursdays 7:30-10:30 p.m.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER, YMCA, 341 E. 17 St. Mondays 7-9 p.m.

SQUARE DANCING, YWCA, Lexington Ave. & 53 St. Thursdays 8:30-11:30 p.m.

"SQUARES & ROUNDS", 5 W. 63 St. Wednesdays 8:30-11 p.m.

WEST SIDE BRANCH, YWCA, 501 W. 50 St. Tuesdays 8-11 p.m.

YMHA, 92 St. and Lexington Avenue. Sundays 8:30-10:30 p.m.

Hilarious drawings of famous figures of the ballet, on and off the stage.

More Ballet Laughs

by

ALEX GARD

Fifty-six full pages of dancers, choreographers, composers, creators and impresarios —practically all of Mr. Gard's long out-of-print "Ballet Laughs" plus a lot of new caricatures.

Among those present are Danilova, Dolin, Franklin, Markova, Riabouchinska, Toumanova, Balanchine, Tudor, S. Hurok, Stravinsky—and everybody else of importance. Here is a must book for all Balletomanes.

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Dance

RUSSIA . . .

The premiere of "Cinderella" a new ballet by Serge Prokofieff, was recently performed at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. Perrault's classic story was choreographed by R. Zakharov with decor by P. Williams and libretto by N. Volkov. The role of Cinderella was alternately performed by Olga Lepeshinskaya and Galina Ulanova, and that of the Prince by Gabovich and Preobrazhensky. Victorina Krieger was seen as the stepmother.

NEW YORK . . .

A new ballet company, titled "Ballet for America," under the co-direction of Yurek Shabelevski and Yurek Lazowski, will begin a nationwide tour in mid-September. Already on its roster are Nana Gollner, Kathryn Lee (currently of "Are You With It?"), Tatiana Grantzeva ("Song of Norway"), Bettina Rosay (Ballet Russe Highlights), and Paul Petroff. Scheduled is a ballet based on the story of Lola Montez, to which Edward Caton has been assigned. Tadeusz Sadlowski and Paul Berlin, concert duo-pianists, will porvide musical accompaniment . . . Ballet Associates has commissioned John Taras to stage a new ballet, "Camille," for Markova and Dolin which will open at the Met this fall . . . Colonel de Basil's Original Ballet Russe is scheduled to open a New York run in October. Lichine and Riabouchinska will join the company for a nation-wide tour...Igor Youskevitch is reported planning to join Ballet Theatre in its transcontinental tour following its London season at Covent Garden, July to September. Music Corporation of America will handle bookings for this company upon its return to America...Marina Svetlova, Met Opera ballerina, takes her ballet concert group to Latin America for a two months' tour in June...Ruth St. Denis came out of semi-retirement to give three performances in June at La Meri's Ethnologic Theatre.

HOLLYWOOD . . .

The filming of S. Hurok's autobiography, "Impresario," has been called off by Twentieth Century-Fox, with dissatisfaction reported from both sides on the script. It is reported, too, that Darryl Zanuck doubted the box-office value of the picture...Dancer-painter-author Angna Enters' "Silly Girl" is slated for production by MGM...Ivan Kirov has been signed by Selznick to a seven year contract...Three "ballerina" films are currently in the making: "The Life and Loves of Pavlowa" in which Tamara Toumanova stars and Balanchine is directing the dance sequences; "The Silver Lining" with Milada Mladova as Pavlowa; and "Silver Slipper" (a remake of "Ballerina") for which Cyd Charisse dances and David Lichine choreographs . . . A tap-samba is introduced as a screen "first" by Ann Miller in Columbia's "Rio" . . .

CHICAGO . . .

Pearl Primus, star dancer of "Show Boat," has been signed as the only featured dancer to appear this coming season with the Chicago Opera Company. She will do the Witch Doctor in its presentation of "Emperor Jones." Ruth Page has been reengaged as Ballet Director for the company.

LONDON . . .

The Sadler's Wells Ballet season at Covent Garden was extended to May 25th, making a three months' run to sold-out houses for the company... The first English all-Negro ballet company, Ballets Negres, opened on April 30 for a six weeks' season... Ballet Rambert will present a new ballet, "Mr. Punch," by Walter Gore with decor by Ronald Wilson and a specially composed score by Arthur Oldham. Its Fall season will also see the addition of Act I of "Giselle" to its repertory ...The visiting Ballets des Champs Elysèes is concluding its highly successful season in London...On May 27 the Sadler's Wells Opera-Ballet premiered "Khadra," a new ballet by Celia Franca to Sibelius' "Belshazzar's Feast" with decor and costumes by Honor Frost.

PARIS . . .

Jacques Ibert's music for the ballet, "Les Amours de Jupiter," produced by Les Ballets des Champs Elysèes, is receiving wide acclaim by Paris critics . . . Spanish dancer Ana Nevada joins the ranks of choreographers with her creation, "Los Caprichos," for the same company ...Ballets Jooss played the same theatre in Paris where the company was awarded the first prize in the International Dance Competition for "The Green Table."...Vania Psota, dancer-choreographer of Colonel de Basil's Original Ballet Russe, has been invited to Prague as guest ballet-master by the Czechoslovakian government . . . Tamara Toumanova and Jean Guelis have both received offers to join the Paris Opera Ballet this Fall.

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Celli, 1697 Broadway, N. Y. C. 19.
Phil Hayden, 6 Dupont Circle, Washington, D. C.
Mabel Horsey, 1697 Broadway, New York City
Hildenbrandt School of Dancing, 26 Booknook Bldg., Walla Walla, Washington.
Jacob's Pillow, Lee, Mass.
McCune School, 200 N. Main, Salt Lake City, Utah
Ivan Novikoff, 215 Medical Arts Bldg., Seattle, Wash.
Arthur Prince, 855 So. La Brea, Los Angeles, Calif.
San Francisco Ballet School, 236 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco.
School of Dance Arts, 819 Carnegie Hall, N. Y. C.
Jan Veen, 26 The Fenway, Boston, Mass.
Waiman Associates, 1658 Broadway, New York 19.

Readers Write

Sirs:

I want to express my gratitude to you and congratulate you on the vast improvement of Dance. For us lovers of the dance in this corner of the world the magazine is a great joy. We are so hungry for news here and we find in your magazine all we are eager to know.

S. TISHOVSKY
Haifa, Palestine

Sirs:

As an interested spectator of dance for some forty years, and acquainted with some of the inner workings of management, I felt the article on Sol Hurok was definitely "soft-pedalled." The many lawsuits brought against him by artists under his management are hardly covered by Miss Myers' statement that there have been "run-ins and breakdowns."

GRANT KINGSLEY
Chicago, Illinois

Sirs:

Appreciate articles on London and Leningrad ballet and comments on dancing around the globe. Mr. Haskell's last paragraph on exchanging ballet companies is an excellent idea. It would be a wonderful thing for us to see the great Russian dancers. It might do a lot to make a better understanding between the peoples of the world.

MARIE E. VOLLAHLIK
Hopkinton, Mass.

Sirs:

Of exceptional interest in the April Dance was the lay-out of the Pearl Primus article, "Hard Time Blues"—the most "eye-catching" I have yet seen in the dance publications.

BARRY LYNN
Dance Theatre
Salt Lake City, Utah,

Sirs:

I was particularly interested in the May article on "Television and the Dance." The thought that it may someday be possible for us "provincials" to see the great dance artists without the necessity of a visit to New York is a gratifying one indeed. I hope you will keep us informed on the new developments in this field.

ALFRED L. GORING
Seattle, Washington.

Dance

VOLUME XX June, 1946 NUMBER 6

Rudolf Orthwine, Editor and Publisher

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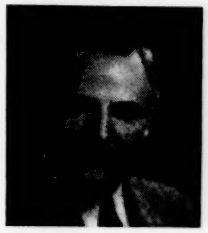
COVER: Nana Whitaker of Swathmore, Pennsylvania, waits backstage for her turn to dance at the Cleveland Folk Dance Festival. Photo: Harry Henderson—Sam Shaw.

TOLERANCE THROUGH DANCE



A highly successful folk dance festival was held recently under the auspices of the Department of Physical Education of Hunter College and sponsored by the Community Folk Dance Centre in conjunction with local ethnic groups. It was under the direction of Michael Herman, a veteran of folk dance activities. Herman, just recently discharged from the armed forces, used his folk dance technique with great success in the rehabilitation of soldiers with artificial limbs

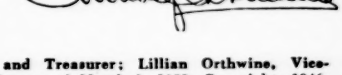
Herman's Community Folk Dance Centre, as well as many similar groups throughout the country, are doing a wonderful job in conditioning the bodies and minds of people everywhere. In a well organized folk dance group, people of all nationalities are brought close together and become good neighbors and friends.

About two years ago I witnessed the preview of the OWI filming of Herman's folk dance group. There were Poles, Chinese, Hungarians, Swedes, Germans, Russians, Spaniards and a few other nationalities presenting their national dances. When I inquired as to how well they mixed, Herman informed me that only a few nationals disapproved of one national dance. When he told them that he permitted no discrimination in his group, they joined the dance and enjoyed it. They later became the most ardent supporters of this dance and after several months were the best of friends with the national group in question. Today they have no trace of antagonism in their makeup. The same is true with other nationals who in Europe are traditionally known to be enemies.

For learning and participating in the culture of people of every land, folk dancing offers, as does no other medium, the greatest avenue of understanding. It eliminates the antagonism and even the hate that are built upon ignorance by bringing people together on a basis of mutual friendship and play.

Hunter College is to be commended for its part in this movement which builds for true democracy among people. I hope that schools, colleges and communities throughout the country will encourage and sponsor folk dance groups. This is one way that we in the dance field can be of guidance and help in this troubled era of misunderstanding, selfishness and mistrust by seeking truth and knowledge through association.

We are fortunate in the United States, the melting pot of all nations, in having the opportunity to learn the ways of other people without travel. Close association with a folk dance group provides us with this opportunity. Join a folk dance group today or start one in your community if there is none now. It is one of the most inexpensive forms of enjoyment from which you can derive a great satisfaction.



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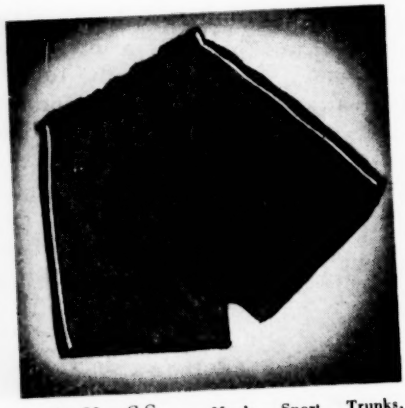

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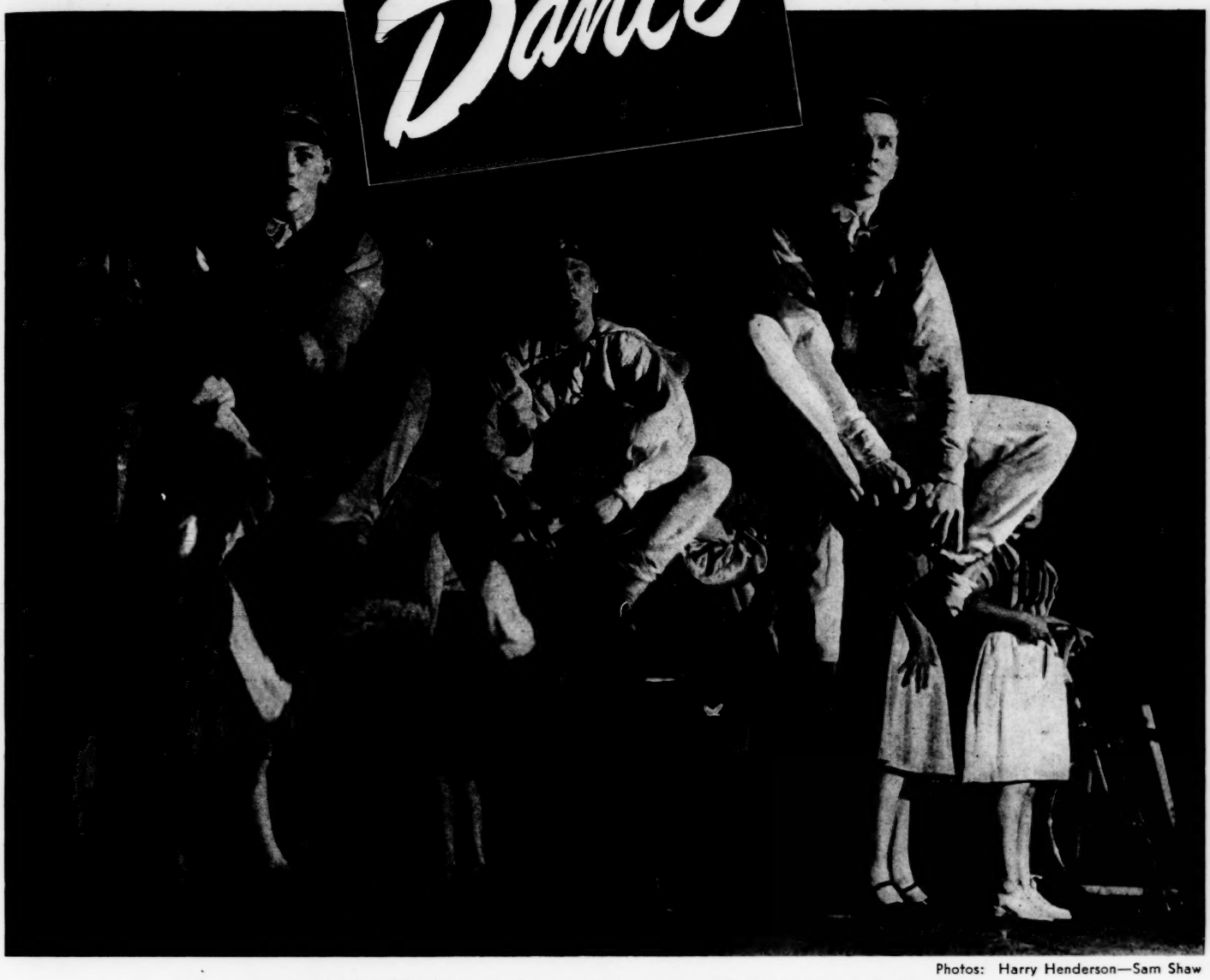


Photos: Harry Henderson—Sam Shaw

In a vigorous Bavarian folk dance, boys in regional costume clap hands, leap and slap that shoe.

FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

Cleveland's annual event is melting-pot of U. S. and world-wide folk dancing

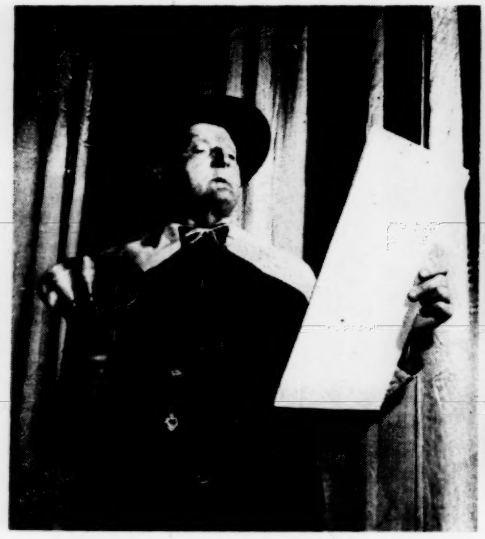
by BARTON HENDERSON

WHEN more than four hundred dancers, some traveling a thousand miles, get together for a three day festival of solid dancing, it's one of the biggest, busiest dance events of the year. In this particular case it looks like the United Nations at play.

The occasion is the National Folk Festival sponsored in Cleveland from May 22nd to May 25th by the Cleveland Sesquicentennial Commission and Western Reserve University. It features three lively days of wheeling, skipping and twisting, after which the participants head for home with a raft of new friends, an armful of notes on different folk dances and costumes, a neat set of blisters and happy hearts.

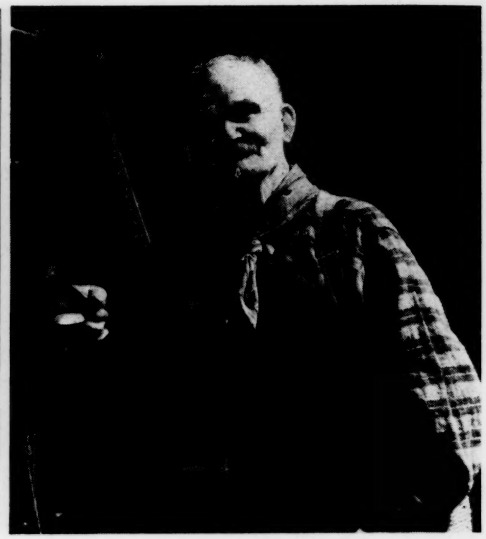
To get to this shindig people travel from almost every state in the Union. Some come in chartered busses. Some hitch-hike. Some come in ancient jalopies packed with dancers and costumes. Railroads rush the rails to the music of scraping fiddles and stomping feet.

As in former years, there is dancin' in the aisles. Everybody comes. Old time prospectors tug at pack-straps for the trip down the mountain while the cook gets in a little last minute practice at his favorite "sashay." Lumberjacks shoot the white waters in light canoes to where they can get a train for Cleveland. Saddle leather creaks as cowboys head out for the folk dance round-up. Indians bust out of the reservation. College groups, excused from classes, make the trip. Polish women in Pennsylvania wash, iron and pack their brilliant costumes. Italians, Hungarians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Czechoslovakians, Norwegians and Lithuanians buy their tickets from Pittsburgh,



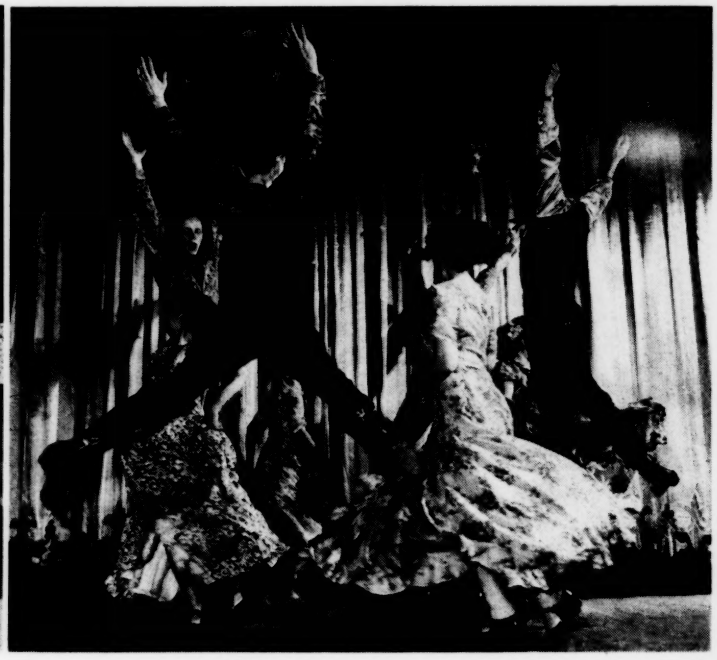
Hear Ye! Hear Ye! The program is announced with due solemnity by bell-ringing town crier Amos Kubic of Provincetown, Massachusetts.

A charming Ukranian girl waits her turn. Many folk dance costumes, created in ancient patterns, are examples of fine and beautiful needlecraft.



Old-timer provides rhythmic accompaniment by clicking spoons. In early days musical instruments were improvised from kitchen utensils.

Backstage, sailors get into an impromptu jitterbug session with a Ukranian group. The girl's heavy boots seem to be no impediment.



Buckaroos leap and holler while the ladies swing and swirl. Dances of American Southwest were preserved by cowboys of the range country.

St. Paul, Boston, Detroit, Ashville, Chicago and Scranton. The Danes, the Swiss, the Russians and Greeks come, too. Everybody gets a chance.

The Folk Festival has all the color of a rodeo, the acrobatics and surprises of a circus, and the warmth and friendliness of a church picnic. Mornings are given over to lectures and instruction periods on the dances of various nationalities, with illustrations on the designing and making of authentic costumes. Right after lunch the Bagpipes wail and everybody is off in the Highland Fling. Dance groups of towns and cities from Maine to Texas in quick succession present their dances and teach them in turn to all comers. A New England French group dances the Jibidi Jibida and teaches it to a bunch of Colorado "hoss wranglers," while a gang of Swedish woodchoppers from Wisconsin is in the corridor tying themselves in knots with the Ukrainian Gopak.

Most folk dance groups specialize in the dances of a particular culture. The Festival permits them to perform for each other and exchange repertoires. Under the impetus of these Festivals everybody now swaps dances. Just as America has become the melting pot of the world, the Festival has become the melting pot of folk dancing. Thus the Greeks teach their Syrto to the Danes who in turn teach their beautiful Dance of the Crested Hen.

These Festivals have been held eleven times since 1934 and in that time dancers have formed friendships with other dancers half way across the nation. There are family reunions and celebrations for new children, new brides, new grooms. There is singing and party-ing all the

(*continued on page* 45)

Opposite page: Stanley Sarnecki and Adeline Zyck of Milwaukee perform the Polish wedding dance. The pretty petticoat is traditional.

ON WITH BURLESQUE

A couple of gobs (left) evince enthusiasm for Jessica Rogers, the eminent striptiseuse. Miss Rogers (above) evinces cool hauteur.

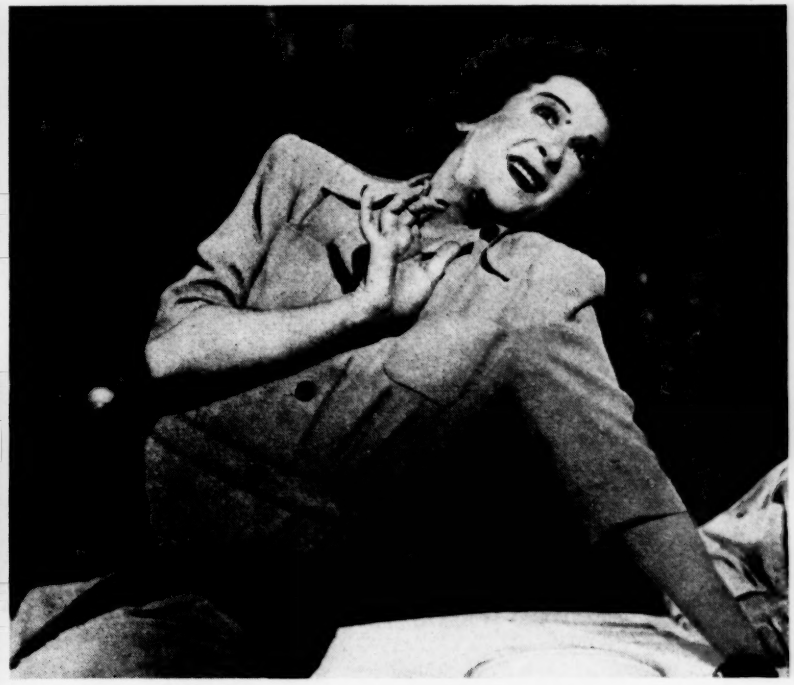
Gypsy Rose Lee, erstwhile queen of burley-cue, is today a fully-clothed authoress.

Vandamm

Backstage at a burlesque theatre as the girls await the entrance cue. Such scenes are mostly fond memories today.

International News Photo

The incomparable W. C. Fields, graduate of burlesque, in a characteristically mellow moment at the microphone.



Another burleycue graduate, Fannie Brice, in a comedy burlesque scene from MGM's "Ziegfeld Follies of 1946."

a plea for the revival of a too-long neglected art that is the poor man's paradise

by BERNARD SOBEL

EVERY man and woman in the United States should see a burlesque show! Every town should have one, running regularly, matinee and night.

"What a shocking suggestion," some people will protest. "Burlesque is immoral, indecent, unfit for the public."

But they are largely wrong. Their opinions are based on prejudice. They've probably never seen a burlesque show. They don't realize that their opposition stifles free expression and the growth of native theatrical art.

The burlesque theatre, as a matter of fact, presents one of the lustiest forms of entertainment ever devised. Here a man can go in his working clothes and enjoy himself for little money. Here he can get a partial glimpse of the legitimate theatre otherwise denied him. Here—best of all—he can find a refuge from the monotony of motion pictures, the perpetually handsome hero and the cosmeticized heroine, the viciously false impressions of American home and business life.

For the burlesque theatre is down-to-earth. It is real in the sense that Rabelais and Boccaccio were real. It takes life as it finds it and purges evil with laughter. It has been an important influence in establishing a wholesome attitude toward sex because it acknowledges honestly the beauty of the human figure and exploits frankly the humor inherent in the relation of the male to the female.

In spite, however, of the great influence that this forbidden form of entertainment has had on the theatrical world, only a small part of the population has ever had the fun of attending a performance. The experience is memorable.

Just before the curtain rises, a young fellow known as the candy butcher appears in the central aisle. He makes an elaborate spiel praising the merits of his stock and then offers for sale a book of colored photographs revealing "women's hidden charms."

From this moment on, the show turns into a typical small-scale musical comedy or revue. The chorus appears and shouts out a welcoming opening song. Vaudevillians startle the audience with feats of magic and juggling. Dancers present soft shoe numbers and clog novelties.

But it is with the arrival of the comics that the show really gets going. There are

(*continued on page* 40)

Above: Jack Pearl beats out a laugh.

Below: Barbara Stanwyck is seen here in the title role of "Lady of Burlesque."

Photos: British Combine

These rare photos show young warriors of the Baca tribe, Transkei, Africa, in the frenzy of their "Feast of the First Fruits" dance. This ritual takes place at full moon, during Easter, when the crops are ripe. After a sunrise procession, the Chief consumes a small portion of the "first fruits," distributes same to his people, and leads the feasting and dancing which sometimes last three weeks.

LIVING DANCE OF AFRICA

tom-toms, jungle rhythms and the advanced art of a "primitive" people

by PEARL PRIMUS

[Pearl Primus, the terpsichorean star of "Show Boat," is as adept with her typewriter fingers as with her dancing feet. She is currently taking courses towards her doctorate in Anthropology at Columbia University. This essay summarizes some of her findings in the relatively unexplored field of native African dancing and discusses some theories and misconceptions.—Ed. Note]

PRIMITIVE dancing is a misnomer. There is nothing primitive about it. This art, which has been the chief manifestation of culture of the African Negro and other so-called primitive peoples, requires tremendous technique, imagination, agility and speed. It embodies the very pulse of life of such civilizations. Compared with it, dance plays a meagre and feeble role in our modern society.

Unfortunately, this art is fast disappearing. Africa, called the dark continent because so little was and is known about her past, her people and their customs, has become the playground of enterprising so-called civilized countries. Civilization with her good and evil alike has rooted itself in the soil of Africa. With her forces for good she is fighting diseases (which claim countless native workers each year), making modern roads, and speeding communication and trade. She is discovering the vastness of natural resources buried for ages in the fertile soil.

But in the process, the strong ebony body of the native has become a pawn in the exploitation of the continent's wealth; for the native mines the gold, the copper, the tin. His health is ruined in the course of this work and the few coins he receives in return cannot support him—much less his family. Little wonder then that the home which at one time was the core of African life has been split.

With the disappearance of the home comes the disappearance of native arts. Men and women alike are too busily engaged in trying to exist—trying to understand the white man who preaches a kind God but who denies them equality. The healthiness of outdoor life which had made their ancestors such specimens of strength—so strong that they were stolen to supply the labor of the world—is not evidenced today, except in the sections where the pressure of modern life has not quite penetrated. And so the dance is disappearing.

In Africa the dance was all-important. With very few exceptions the social, political, religious and esthetic life of the village centered in the dance. It expressed the very heartbeat of communal living and was an accurate mirror of the psychology of the people. The many misconceptions that exist about African dance do it a grave injustice.

All who blush at the mere mention of African dancing have obviously been misled by that product of frustrated civilized man—the sex dancer. In his lecture on "The Function of Different Dance Forms in Primitive African Communities," Geoffrey Gorer, well known for his book "Africa Dances," made this statement: "There is practically no erotic element in African dancing. It is fairly uncommon for men and women to dance together at the same time; about the only times they do are in their solemn religious dances." As a rule the African wears more clothing while dancing than in everyday life, whereas the modern sex dancer is as near nude as the police department will allow.

Another common belief is that African dance is wild and lacks control. I can say, from experience, that to dance to the deep voices of tom-toms requires a mental and physical control great indeed. In the most seemingly relaxed movements the dancer is held by the powerful drumbeats. The primitive orchestra never improvises—the drums, large and small, carved out of tree trunks, the tambours, the xylophones, the native guitars, the peculiar wind instruments—all participate in the score as if it were written out and rehearsed. These are traditional rhythms handed down from drummer to drummer (one of the foremost professions of the continent). The drums control the dancer and even if to the untrained eye his movements do not seem disciplined, he is exacting of his body a precision unsurpassed in any other culture. The dancer employs his whole body—his movements for the most part are large—all the big muscles of the torso are used. The subtlety derives not from gesture but from the invisible tie between the dancer and the drums.

On my trip South of the Mason and Dixon line in 1944 I discovered in the Baptist churches the voice of the drum—not in any instrument but in the throat of the preacher. I found the dynamic sweep of movement through space (so characteristic of Africa) in the motions of the minister and the congregation alike. I felt in the sermons the crashing thunder-dances of Africa and I was hypnotized by the pounding rhythm of song. Did the dance which the slave brought to America and which disappeared under pressure from his master re-emerge in the freedom of his church?

To quote Mr. Gorer: "The technique of African dancing—the dance steps—are above all acrobatic. In this they have a certain correspondence with the European tradition of classical ballet. By and large, African dancing does not use the same vocabulary as classical ballet but the virtuosity which can produce such miracles as the fouette, pirouette and battement, would be thoroughly congenial to the African dance. Some of these acrobatic and semi-acrobatic steps are developed to a pitch of almost incredible.

(continued on page 46)

NIGHT CLUB IMPRESSIONS

by JOHN GROTH

ONE AFTERNOON a few days ago, a tall stranger wandered into my studio. He studied a few pictures on my walls, and then seeing my ever-full basket of discarded sketches, asked me for one as a souvenir. Being naturally generous with discarded sketches, I signed one for him. In reciprocation he handed me his card which proclaimed him one of the world's great rhumba teachers, and said if I ever felt the need of a few lessons he would be happy to oblige.

That night I dropped into the Embassy Club where they specialize in food and drink, and the smart set dances a rhumba right out of Arthur Murray. My girl and I watched—she insisted we didn't dance. I don't rhumba. I sat and sketched the surrounding scene.

Beneath the enormous chandelier that hung over the center of the floor were crowded couples sometimes moving slowly and clinging closely, sometimes flinging themselves with civilized abandon into a fast clicking samba. I kept wishing I knew how to rhumba and so did my girl. When I got home I looked for the calling card of my visitor. I had lost it. If he should read this piece, I wish he'd get in touch with me. I still feel the need for a few of those lessons.

WATER BALLET

Esther Williams is moviedom's most glamorous mermaid

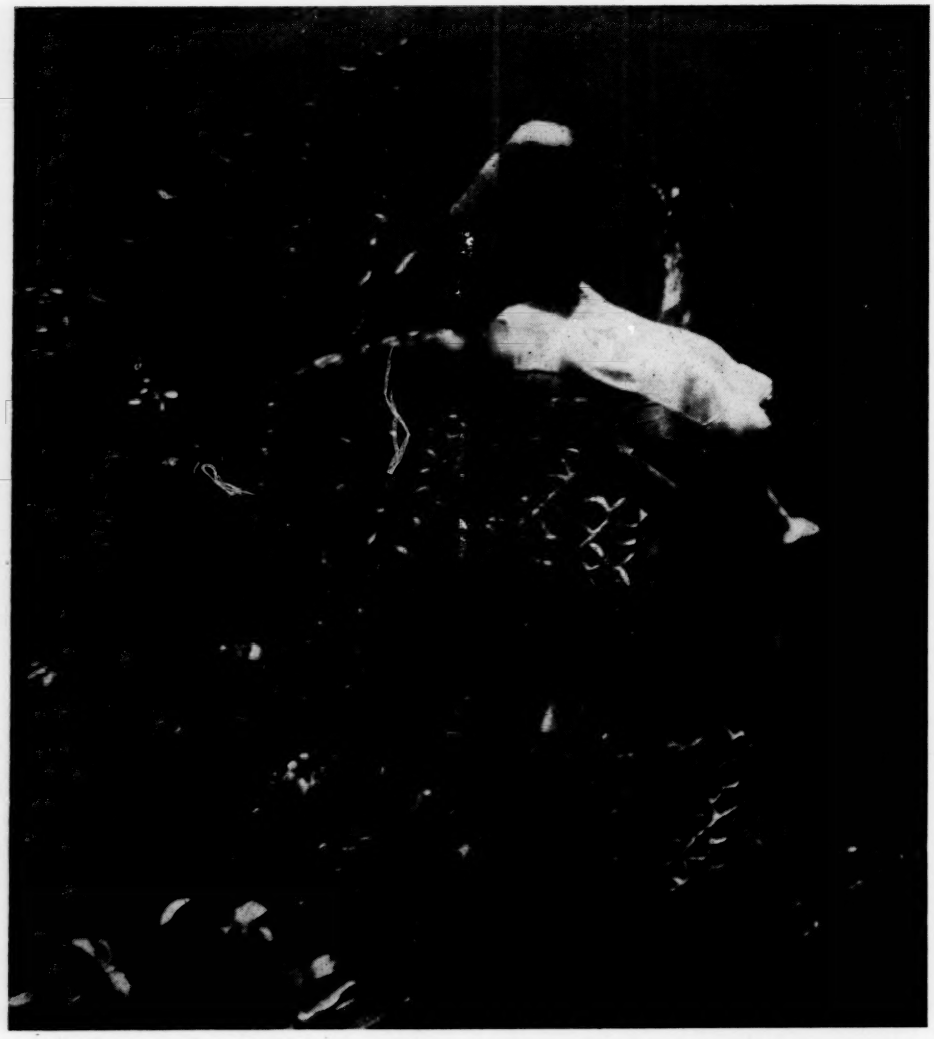
by PHILIP K. SCHEUER

WHEN Esther Williams performed her ballet for *Ziegfeld Follies,* she had to blow bubbles every so often so that people would know she was really under water. Otherwise they might have gotten the notion she was being photographed in slow motion and, like Little Eva, merely being propelled through space on invisible wires.

She had to learn to do a great many other things that had never come within her ken during all her previous swimming experiences—whether as winner of the Women's Nationals at Des Moines in 1939 in the 100-meter free style, and as a member of the 300-meter medley and of the champion 400-meter free-style relay team; as the loveliest mermaid of all in Billy Rose's Aquacade at the San Francisco World's Fair, or even as the star of Metro-Goldwyn Mayer's *Bathing Beauty.*

In fact, she had hardly ever swum under water before, except incidentally —let alone "danced" an entire ballet by herself at from ten to twenty feet below the surface.

For her studio it was a time of great learning, too. The elevated "saucer tank," sixty feet in diameter and twenty feet deep, hadn't been used for anything so fancy since Johnny Weissmuller grappled with a crocodile for one of the early "Tarzans." It had never been shot in three-strip Technicolor, and no maiden had ever before courted the Muse of the Dance above its astonished cast-iron floor. Indeed, according to Merrill Pye, assistant to producer Jack Cummings as well as designer and director of the sequence, it was the most elaborate submarine experiment Metro had attempted since it



The cameraman catches Esther Williams in the middle of a somersault against one of the five sub-sea settings which form the background for her ballet performed entirely under water.

backed a man named Williamson in some ill-fated diving-bell didoes off Florida and the Bahamas many years ago.

"We had a paper Williamson had written on camera exposures when we started," Pye chuckles. "When we finished we knew more about it than he did. We learned, for instance, that you can't hope to get prespective in color under water; you're lucky to get clear definition and some contrasts. Then there was the business of focus. Water exaggerates everything. Shooting through windows on three levels, we had to allow for magnification of from two-and-a-half to four times natural size."

Preparations for the ballet took two months; actual filming—counting stage waits for changes of scenery — nearly three weeks. On the screen the disporting Esther is visible for about three minutes and twenty seconds; but Pye contends it was all very worth while, if only for knowledge gained.

Miss Williams is inclined to agree, albeit somewhat ruefully.

"It was quite an experience," she sighs, drawing the kind of deep breath she was denied for such insupportable periods in that tank. "I guess ninety seconds is the longest I was ever down continuously, but it seemed like an eternity.

"Don't forget that, besides going through the 'dance' motions, I had to allow extra footage at the beginning and end of each shot for cutting and matching.

"The most extreme concentration is necessary to do what you're supposed to. You see, when you're in the water *you don't do what you think you're doing.* Not only do your reflexes act differently, but you have to fight a drift all the time. It's almost impossible to gauge distances, other than by sheer feeling; you can only guess when you're near the center of the camera frame.

"They tried all kinds of ways of directing me. I could judge a little by the location of the camera windows and the props —but displacement makes everything deceptive. Sometimes we used counts, sometimes the public-address system, sometimes both. Merrill and I worked out a rhythm, a sort of waltz tempo, to 'Falling in Love with Love.' Instead of the music, I could hear sharp words barked at me over the loudspeaker—'Up, down, right, left!' and so on. The melody, of course, was in my head.

"Once in a while we sent down my standin so that I could see what a movement or routine looked like. She had one great advantage over me; a nose that turns down a little, making it possible for her to press her upper lip against it and so shut off the breath. I couldn't fit my lip to this turned-up nose of mine, and every time I threw my head back it would fill with water. The make-up department had a gadget nose-piece made—of latex, thin as a membrane and put on with spirit gum. You couldn't see it, of course—or the ear plugs either. But I always wore both."

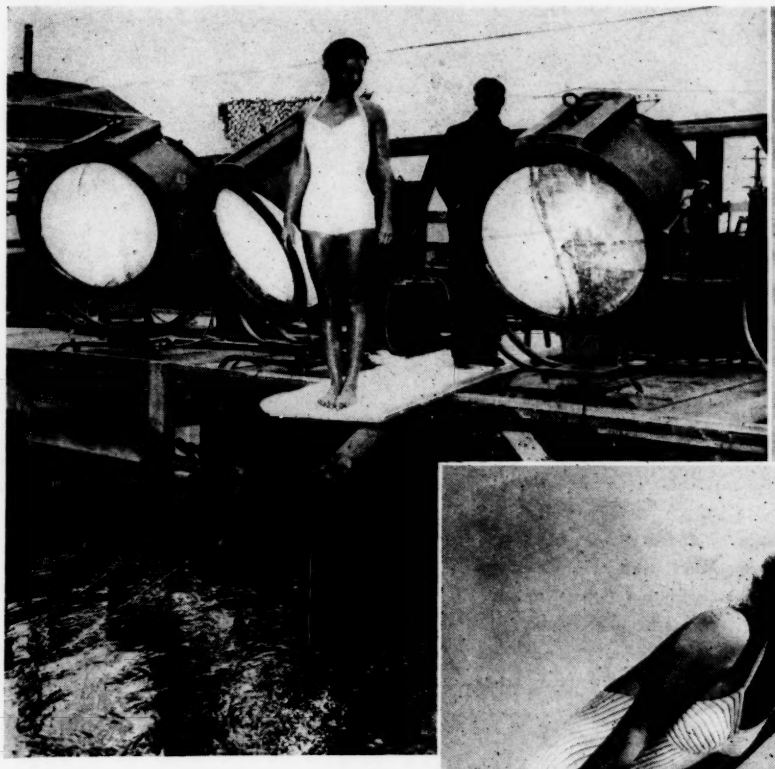
To keep her hair in place, Esther finally settled on an "icky" combination of wave set and vaseline. She'd dunk her head in the bowl, pull the whole shank back, twist and braid it, and deck it in paraffin flowers. (The hair stayed in place, but the flowers didn't.)

Esther Williams was no stranger to ballet by the time *Follies* was ready to roll. "People forget," she reminds them, "that I had nothing much to do for a year before I made *Bathing Beauty*. Under Jeanette Bate, our instructress, I learned first to walk gracefully (a difficult trick), to pivot, to move easily; the dance positions came later.

"When I began rehearsing for the *Follies,* Jeanette and I tried to approximate swimming motions on dry land. But it didn't work out very well, so I got in the water and moved around as much as I could, with Merrill Pye watching and supervising.

"He was a real help because, being a swimmer himself, he understands movement in the water. Great as he is, John Murray Anderson, who directed me in the Aquacade, doesn't know much about that."

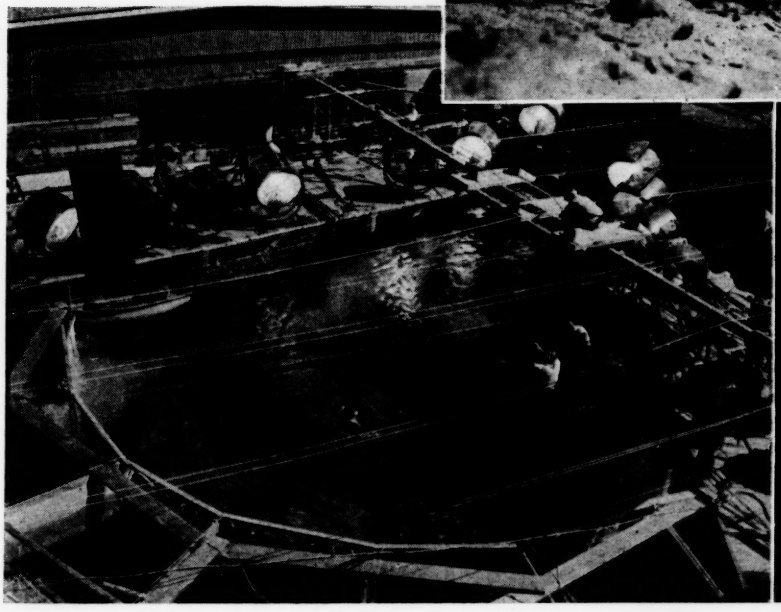
It took plenty of coaxing to get Van Johnson into the tank for his famous under-water kiss with Esther in *Easy to Wed.* "He almost drowned," she recalls merrily. But that's another story.

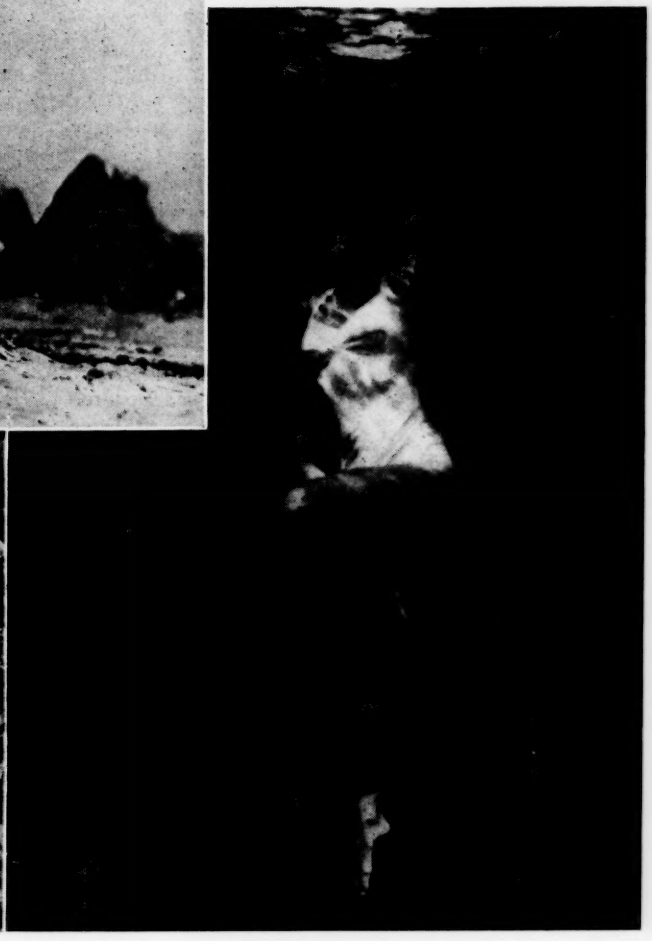


Top: Miss Williams descends into the pool, ears plugged and limbs laved in baby oil.

Below: The ascent. These are times that try a girl's poise, but she comes up smiling.

Top: Casting light upon the water. A Hollywood Lorelei performs her aqueous activities with the help of a small army of electricians, prop and make-up men, as the picture below reveals. Those are electric cables stretched over the pool, and the camera is on a raft near Miss Williams. Center: The swimming ballerina displays perfect form on dry land.





Fred Fehl

Left, top to bottom: Nora Kaye and John Kriza as the ballerina and premier dansuer of Michael Kidd's "ballet within a ballet" of "On Stage"; one of the statue-like moments from Balanchine's "Apollo" with Eglevsky supporting Alonso, Kaye and Barbara Fallis (only legs visible of Kaye and Fallis); the lyric "blues" pas de deux in Jerome Robbins' ballet, "Interplay," with Janet Reed and John Kriza.

Alicia Markova as the Swan Queen in the "white ballet" classic. "Swan Lake."

BALLET

by RUTHELLA WADE

THE SPRING BALLET SEASON of 1946 will probably go down in dance annals as the lull before the Fall Terpsichorean storm. The two companies on hand, the Ballet Theatre and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo—at least three additional troupes are due to augment them later in the year—did not distinguish themselves in the art of the ballet appreciably.

The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, technically strong with its well-trained but small corps de ballet of young American dancers, chose to stick to the classic "spectacles" to which its limited personnel could not do justice. Prima ballerina Danilova, brilliant as ever, held the spotlight. Such Danilova-less ballets as *Scheherazade* and *Frankie and Johnny* seemed empty in the one instance and in poor taste in the second. Frederic Franklin, the overworked premier danseur and ballet master of the company, was prevented from appearing after the first week because of a back injury. This occasioned a hasty re-casting and many hours of rehearsal for an already tired company, and it is a sure guess that the productions lost something without Franklin's presence. The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is at the moment badly in need of some fresh ballets especially suited to its small but extremely capable company. The greatest threat to the company, other than an indifferent public, is another company, with twice the number of dancers, who might perform the "spectacles" of the classics a bit better!

Ballet Theatre, on the other hand, with a large company and orchestra and the Met stage, still relied on *Fancy Free, Spectre de la Rose, Judgment of Paris* and *Peter and the Wolf* which are mainly solo and not ensemble ballets. Technically, the majority of the corps do not have a high standard. This season, several of the more accomplished corps members have been singled out for stellar roles—training, perhaps, to take over for stars who have retired or joined another company that will not show their particular ballet. *Bluebeard,* after this season, will be without Dolin, the last of the original dancers in the Fokine ballet. The star system operated to the detriment of the Ballet Theatre. *Pillar of Fire* and *Undertow,* for instance, both lost strength because Hugh Laing, who created roles for each, had left the company. The star system lessens the chance of long life for any ballet, particularly one with a small cast.

Lasting from February 17 through May 11, the Spring, 1946 ballet season in New York was long in point of time, short in point of accomplishment. And now, on to the Fall season!

Von Kuffner

The spirited Czardas closes the long "Raymonda," classic story-ballet. Left to right: Leon Danielian, Gertrude Tyven, Danilova and Nicholas Magallanes.

Von Kuffner

Danilova in the second scene of "Baiser de la Fee," new Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo offering.

ROUNDUP OF THE SEASON

Ballet Theatre and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo failed to add lustre to the Spring, 1946 dance season

The competition scene from "Graduation Ball," with honor student Margaret Banks being encouraged by Harold Lang and her "team." At the left are John Taras and Rozika Sabo.

Fred Fehl

Fred Fehl

Barbara Fallis as the Princess in "Bluebeard." John Kriza appears in the right background as the Prince in disguise as a herdsman.

Fred Fehl

Alonso and Eglevsky dance the pas de deux from "Graziana," which John Taras created for the spring season of the Ballet Theatre.

In "Gala Performance", Tudor's satire on ballerina rivalry, Nora Kaye is seen as the dramatic Italian, Alicia Alonso as the haughty Russian, and Janet Reed as the flirtatious French dancer.

Fred Fehl

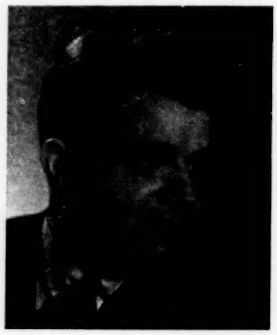
Alicia Alonso and Andre Eglevsky in the Bluebird pas de deux from Dolin's "Princess Aurora." Fred Fehl

At the conclusion of the "mad scene" in "Giselle", Anton Dolin as Count Albrecht emotes as he holds the lifeless body of Giselle (Alicia Markova) in his arms. Nicolas Orloff looks on. Fred Fehl

THE BALLET STAR SYSTEM

hitching Terpsichore to a star can be detrimental to the dance

by WALTER TERRY



EVERYONE (except the audience and the stars) deplores the star system, all of which adds up to a tiny minority of hecklers. Personally, I am in partial agreement with them, for the star system in dance breeds many ills. Very often the star, because of too constant attention, forgets that there are other dancing bodies in the firmament of theatre, and we find him (or her) directing his attention and his interest directly to the audience in complacent oblivion of his cohorts; we also find that he develops those personal qualities for which audiences have manifested a liking to a degree that leads him perilously close to becoming a trickster rather than an artist. During this past season of ballet we have all witnessed performances in which the ballerina has beamed upon her audience instead of upon her leading man, has directed her virtuosity or her body line to those out front, thereby destroying whatever dramatic purpose the choreography may have vouchsafed. In other words, certain stars regard their ballets or their dances as vehicles for self-expression rather than as masterpieces of dance for which they are the interpreters.

Another ill attendant upon the star system is the shackles it places upon skilled but non-stellar performers. All too often famous roles in the ballet are performed time after time, with the possible exception of a few matinees, by the stars, while a younger artist with, perhaps, a fresh approach to the role and vivid interest in it, is relegated to a supporting part. Very often a new work will find an established star of the company in the leading role although the part might be better suited to the special talents of a girl in the corps de ballet. Antony Tudor and Agnes de Mille have successfully defied the rule and given us excellent productions of their works without the benefit of established stars. Tudor's *Pillar of Fire,* for example, made Nora Kaye famous overnight while at the same time making *Pillar* one of the most brilliant ballet productions of our time.

Managers like the star system because it makes money and because it is easier to publicize a personality than a company. But occasionally the star system backfires. When Frederic Franklin was forced to drop out of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo season at N. Y. City Center because of his back injury, I had batches of letters and telephone calls asking when he would be dancing again. The questioners intimated and some of them stated flatly that they would forego further performances until their favorite was back. One dreads to think what would have happened to the season if Alexandra Danilova had had to bow out for illness.

Every company, of course, wants to have fine supporting players and a good ensemble. They are not only essential to the quality of a performance, but some of them can be counted upon to step in if a star should become ill, and a wise management seeks in their ranks the stars of tomorrow. Ballet Theatre's new policy as stated by Lucia Chase, a director of the organization, is to have a company of stars. This would not bar the established headliners from their favorite roles nor even from participating in new ones, but it would mean that a ballet would be cast on the basis of suitability of a performer for a given role and if, say, Fernando Alonso were better suited to a new part, and possessed the necessary technical equipment, than Andre Eglevsky, Mr. Alonso would get the part. This, I think, is a good system. The Nora Kaye fans would have her in stellar roles worthy of her and suited to her, yet unknowns would have an opportunity to dance those roles on occasion and create new ones more in keeping with their talents than with hers. Opportunities would, therefore, await the claimant, incentive would be increased, new stars would be born and you would have an entire company, not bored and dispairing, but on its toes. Whether Ballet Theatre abides by this splendid precept remains to be seen, but certainly it is a worthy one to follow.

On the other hand, I firmly believe that stars, if not the current star system, are inevitable, for it is an audience who makes a star or, if you will, a ballerina. The reason for this may be found in a homely and, perhaps selfish, fact. If, for example, you go to a party you do not talk to everyone at once, but you seek out someone you like upon whom to concentrate your attention. Perhaps you drift about visiting with several friends, and brushing quickly over those you do not know or in whom you are not interested. Theatre is somewhat akin to a social gathering. You are present for a good time, you focus upon a performer you have seen before and you continue this vicarious acquaintanceship. Since the star of a piece not only has a strategic stage position but also possesses, from long experience, a "win friends and influence people" personality, the chances are that you will glue your attention upon him and ultimately become a "fan." The next time you see that dancer work you will automatically expect to find him in his usual role and if he isn't, you will probably feel as irritated as if you had walked into a party and discovered you knew no one present. I think the star system is almost as simple as that. Naturally, a star customarily boasts technical skill and artistry and interpretive powers, but it is the ability to project self or character over the barrier of footlights and it is that warm, personal radiance which most great stage figures possess which reduce the fans to an adoring pulp. This is as it should be, for the theatre ought to be warm and glowing and friendly and audiences should love the dancer who gives so richly of self and genius as much as the dancer loves those rows of indistinguishable beings whose clapping hands are his sweet reward.

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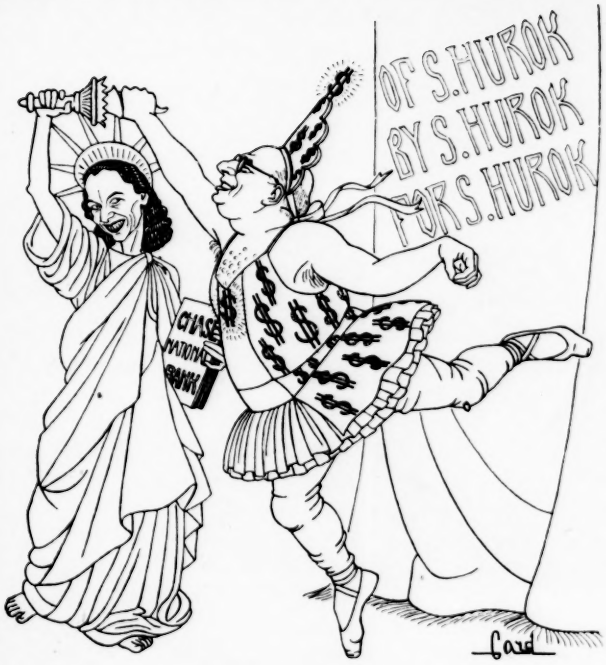
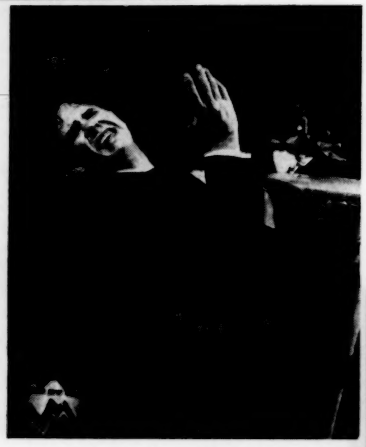


BALLET THEATRE (LUCIA CHASE)
Presents
S. HUROK
IN BIGGER AND BETTER
RUSSIAN BALLET
From 1941—?

"MORE BALLET LAUGHS"

ALEX GARD, balletomane and cartoonist, has just had published his second book of dance caricatures, *More Ballet Laughs* (Scribner's, $2.50). Reprinted here are three of his pointed pen-and-ink impressions, of ballerina Nora Kaye in two contrasting poses, and of S. Hurok and Lucia Chase in those happier days before the great schism. *More Ballet Laughs* contains fifty-seven admirably irreverent drawings and a preface by Walter Terry.



DESI ARNAZ, in addition to being the husband of Lucille Ball of Hollywood, has the distinction of executing a drum dance that is among the more torrid items on the night club circuit. At the moment, Arnaz's bongo beats are the attraction at Monte Proser's Copacabana, and will be shortly heard and seen in the Universal musical, "Cuban Pete." Consisting of a series of improvisations on the conga dance step, the origin of the drum dance can be traced back, if you care, to the native tom-tom dances which regularly highlight the annual carnival and Mardi Gras in Arnaz's native Cuba. Abetting Arnaz in this number is a musical background of eighteen pieces of brass and reed. Arnaz's real name, incidentally, is Desiderio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha III. He has been a bookkeeper, freight checker and truck driver, he owns an eight-acre farm in Chatsworth, California where he and Lucille Ball raise chickens, cattle and fruit, and he recently organized his own band, which has been doing very well indeed.

Desi Arnaz and his uninhibited rhythms are the latest rage on the bistro beat

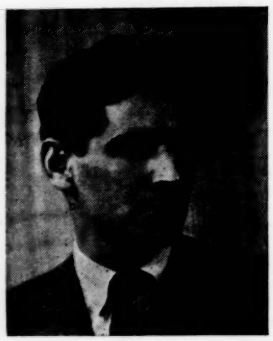
Photos: Fred Bonnard—Picture Surveys, Inc.

DRUM DANCE

MUSIC AND THE DANCE

two closely related mediums—and the analogous question of "fun" in art

by LEONARD BERNSTEIN



[*Leonard Bernstein, conductor of the New York City Symphony, met the enthusiastic approval of dance audiences with his score for Jerome Robbins' "Fancy Free" in* 1944. *His "Jeremiah Symphony" received the Music Critics Circle Award for the season of* 1943-44. *He recently returned from conducting two concerts of American music at the International Music Festival at Prague.—Ed. Note*]

I REMEMBER giving an interview to a New York newspaper in which I replied to the question "Which of your different interests will you eventually choose to follow?" by saying that I wanted to do the thing which seemed most like fun at the time. This elicited a furious letter to the paper from one of its more articulate and choleric readers, upbraiding me for my "light" attitude towards music, and for my apparent lack of social responsibility in giving my art insufficiently serious thought. These paragraphs are meant as a rebuttal to that letter of long ago. (That I did not rebut at the time stands as mute testimony to the fallibility of man and the power of the press.)

The main trouble with these remarks is that the word "fun" is going to appear far too often. The fact of the matter is that the word has no single synonym in our present use of its meaning. If we add up "sense of rightness," "tranquility," "balance," "catharsis," "expressivity," we begin to approach the meaning of "fun." Add to these "participation," "creativity," "order," "sublimation," and "energy-release," and you almost have it. Fun is all the things we find it impossible to say when we hear the opus 131 quartet, or witness "Letter to The World." (Beethoven and Martha Graham must have had this kind of fun *making* those works.) Fun is the final goal of the collected aesthetic searchings of David Prall, Dewey, Richards, and Santayana. Fun is the "x" of the equation which tries to solve the riddle of why art exists at all.

To the normal American mind, "fun" carries with it the connotation of a "good time," a party, a relaxation, diversion, a roller-coaster ride, a thriller on the screen, a hot-dog. There is no Dreadful Dichotomy here; we must simply refer these phenomena to the field of art, deepening the experiential values, solidifying the transience to continuousness, even to semi-permanence. (Analogously, construe the difference between Love-on-the-Run and Love-Eternal. They are not opposed to each other, as some would have us think. They are separate manifestations of the same phenomena, with different motivations, and different results.)

Does it seem strange that a musician of all things, should be discussing these matters in, of all things, a dance magazine? Not at all. For what other two arts better exemplify this concept of *fun* than do music and the dance?

Basically, the only split that occurs in the various art-media is that which divides the representational from the non-representational. Whatever the technique used, or the medium engaged in, all art is one except for this distinction. It is this which often makes it difficult for the writer to comprehend the basic aesthetic impulses of the musician, and vice-versa. It is this which gives rise to the interminable discussions on technique versus content, form versus functionalism, Marxism versus Ivory-towerism, style versus prettiness.

In the case of music, we find that its inherent meaning, from any of the above points of view, is purely a *musical* meaning. Give it what titles you will, add copious program notes, and you still have only a series of notes, arranged in certain orders and patterns. Call the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony "Fate knocking at the door," or the "Morse Code Call to Victory," and you still have three G's and an E-flat. That's *all* you have. Through some freak in the human animal, these four notes, in their particular rhythmic pattern, have the power to produce a substantial effect on us.

In literature, on the other hand, there is another factor —the concept *behind* the words, the essential transparency of letters and syllables and phrases. In theatre there is the element of story, representation, conceptual meaning. *Simile* in painting and sculpture. (In each of these arts, of course, there is an "abstract" movement which comes closer to the musical principle; but this is, after all, a deviation from the basic norm.) In music there is no room for meaning in this extrinsic sense; there is nothing left but the sheer animal enjoyment of organized sound. This I call *fun*.

Dance, because of its proximity to theatre, is not quite so "pure" in this way as is music. Yet it is but one step removed. For, leaving aside for the moment the "dance-dramas" of the last century (which correspond, shall we say, to the programmatic tone-poem of that century's music), we have an art which is basically rhythm, motion, line, tension, release. Whatever representational matter appears belongs to pantomime, superimposed merely, as story-meaning is superimposed upon music. In watching a ballet of Balanchine one feels very close to hearing music itself. A Balanchine ballet is "fun." Likewise, with the inventions of Jerome Robbins.

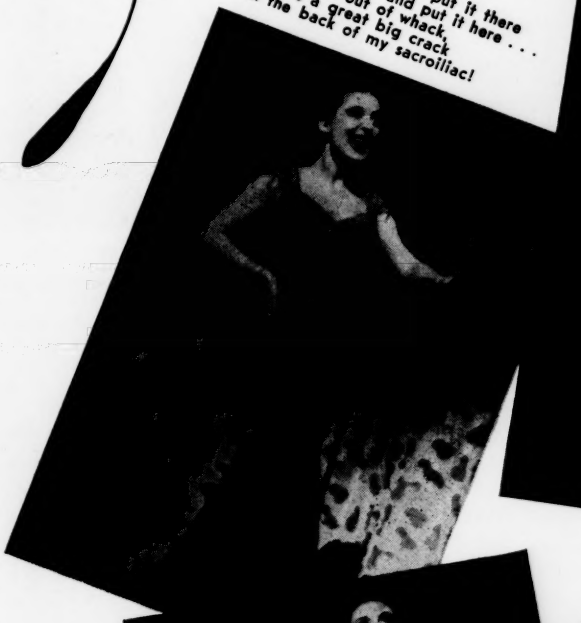
(*continued on page* 42)

"South America ...take it away!"

You beautiful lands below
Don't know what you began.
To put it plainly
I'm tired of shaking my Pan-
American can!

Take back your samba, Ay, your rumba,
Ay, your conga, Ay, yay, yay . . .
All this makin' with the quakin'
And this shakin' of the bacon
Leaves me achin'.

First you shake it and put it there
Then you shake it and put it here . . .
My spine's out of whack
There's a great big crack
In the back of my sacroiliac!



The show-stopper song from the click "Call Me Mister" is a ditty entitled "South America, Take It Away!", delivered by comedienne Betty Garret. As a USO hostess who is fed up with rhumbas, sambas and congas, Miss Garret rips into Harold Rome's lively lyrics with both her tonsils and her torso in a fashion calculated to constitute the final word on Terpsichore South of the border for some time to come. Miss Garret, for the record, is a former Martha Graham dancer. Martha Graham, take it away!

This fancy swishin' in position
Wears out all of my transmission
Ammunition! Hole'!

I know there's danger really lurkin'
If my rear end keeps on workin'
At this jerkin'—Hole'!

SOUTH AMERICA! TAKE IT AWAY!
(Words & music by Harold J. Rome. Copyright 1946, M. Witmark & Sons, reprinted by special permission.)

Photos: Bob Golby

PICTURES BY PETERICH

a snapshot of a photographer whose work ranges from high-speed action to portrait studies stressing choreography rather than technique

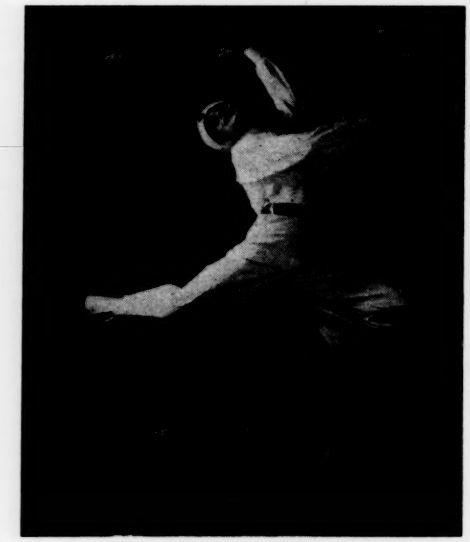
GERDA PETERICH, whose extraordinary dance studies are visible every month in *Dance,* is a camerawoman who has mastered a comprehensive range of photographic techniques and subjects. Primarily interested in action photography, she turned to lensing terpsichoreans five years ago, not long after coming to this country from abroad.

In her dance photography, she is mainly interested in portraying the dancer's personality, style and "dance language." "The aim," she says, "is to depict the dance personality, not to exhibit photographic brilliance. A good photograph is primarily admired for its content, secondarily for its artistry and its technique. Therefore in dance portraiture the photographer should only be an instrument and subordinate himself to the creative impulse of the dancer." Probably her outstanding trait is the ability to capture the high moment of a dance movement in all its individualized emotional quality.

Chiefly known for her vivid action shots of dancers, Miss Peterich has also done exceptional portraits, as the study of Pauline Koner on the opposite page will attest. "In close-up work," she says, "the photographer must be more creative, as the dancer in repose is not expressing and giving as much. Lighting and composition should be combined consciously with the study of expression to achieve a portrait abstract enough to be lasting."

Born in Munich, she is today a teacher, writer and lecturer on photographic subjects, and a contributor to numerous exhibits. She is now turning her camera skyward to photograph airplanes in flight, and earthward to do outdoor studies of "just plain people" in action.

D.S.



Backstage shot of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's Frederic Franklin costumed for "The Red Poppy."

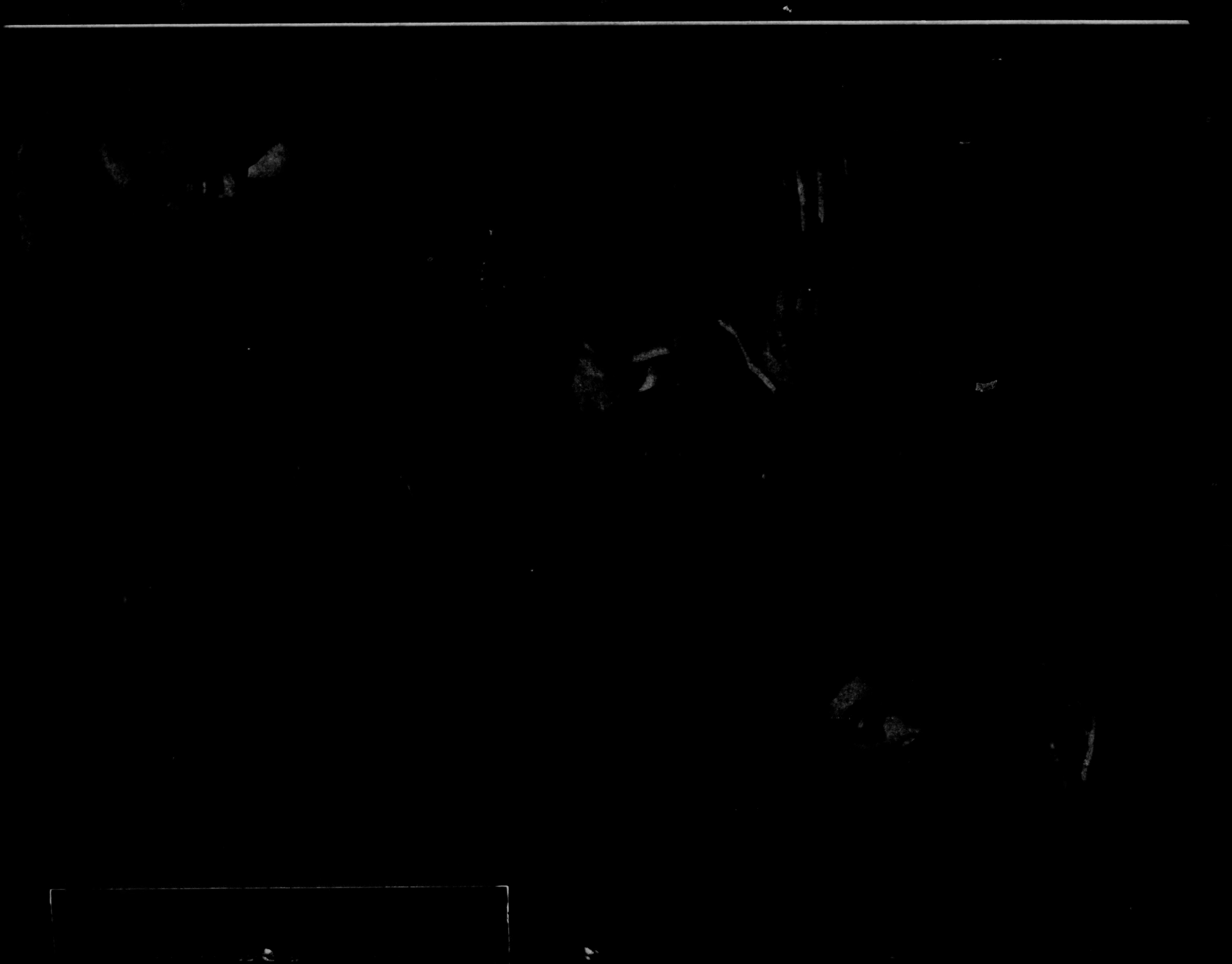
Robert Gildenberg

An action photographer in action. Miss Peterich shoots a photo from a high angle. (The majority of action shots are from a low angle.)

Noted for height and imagination of his leaps, Paul Sweeney is shown in one of a series of action shots taken by Miss Peterich.

A high leap for the Peterich camera by Dorothie Littlefield, star of "Song of Norway" and now collaborating with sister Catherine on the new Sonja Henie ice show.

Right: Montage of facial expressions from Pauline Koner's dance, "Mothers of Men."



A Word on Plays

calling off all the adjectives for "Call Me Mister"—a majority report

by Ernest Lehman

IF *Call Me Mister* isn't the best revue to hit Broadway since *The Little Show,* it will have to do until this department's memory proves otherwise. Its people, all of them previously associated with the armed forces, are as lively and likable a lot of troupers as any show could ask for. The score is first class and, wonder of wonders, the sketches are hilarious. If military service can work such miracles on its men and women, the denizens of Shubert Alley owe it to themselves to enlist immediately for a short refresher course in The Production of Smash Hits.

Noblest Roman

Melvyn Douglas of the klieglights and Herman Levin of the legal lights are the two gentlemen who are responsible for assembling so many goodies into one package. They were particularly fortunate in their choice of Harold Rome for music and lyrics. Rome is something of a rarity —a respected member of ASCAP who does not believe that Tin Pan Alley is necessarily the shortest distance between two points. In *Call Me Mister,* his tunes are always melodic, yet never reminiscent, and his words are both evocative and provocative. When he means to pen a satiric lyric, he is positively devastating. From the opening number, when the civilian-bound GIs tell you that the critics have more power than General Eisenhower, to the next-to-closing spot, when three Southern Senatorial jackasses intone their ludicrous litany, Rome's ideas are consistently wise and witty.

He is not, of course, unassisted. For one thing, there's Lehman Engel's able musical direction. For another, the principals. Lawrence Winters, a fine Negro with a fine voice, makes haunting music of "Going Home Train," "The Red Ball Express" and "The Face on the Dime." Paula Bane and Danny Scholl treat the love songs tenderly. And Betty Garrett, a lady about whom you'll be hearing much, if you haven't already, turns "Surplus Blues" and "South America, Take It Away" into private panics of her own. The latter number, in which Miss Garrett makes mockery of the physiological effects of the samba, rumba and conga on the female anatomy, could go on forever if a

playgoer's palms and Harold Rome's lyrics did not, perforce, give out after a half-dozen encores.

But when songs give out, there is always something lurking in the wings waiting to rap you smartly across the funnybone. For this, give thanks to the ubiquitous Miss Garrett, to a very comical fellow named Jules Munshin and to Arnold Auerbach, the graduate of Fred Allen's gag-factory who dished up the hit skits.

The Garrett girl pops up in a half dozen numbers and an equal number of disguises, confounding even the most careful readers of The Playbill as she runs the ga-ga gamut from hash-house waitress to Park Avenue dowager. Munshin drives himself, the audience, and, it is to be assumed, several Hollywood scouts into a frenzy when he gives his version of Maurice Evans as the train announcer. (To Peoria—or not to Peoria, that is the question.)

Mad Munshin

It is Munshin who spearheads the attack on your abdomen in a belly-laugh provoking sketch titled "Off We Go," which was written by the aforementioned Mr. Auerbach in collaboration with Arnold Horwitt. Here, the Air Force "glamour boys" are shown to us as they might be imagined by the ordinary infantryman after he has seen too many movie versions of them. It is a masterpiece of tomfoolery, surely the greatest giggle-getter since Helen Broderick and Frank Morgan waited for a cab in the rain in *The Bandwagon* too many years ago.

Wray Awry

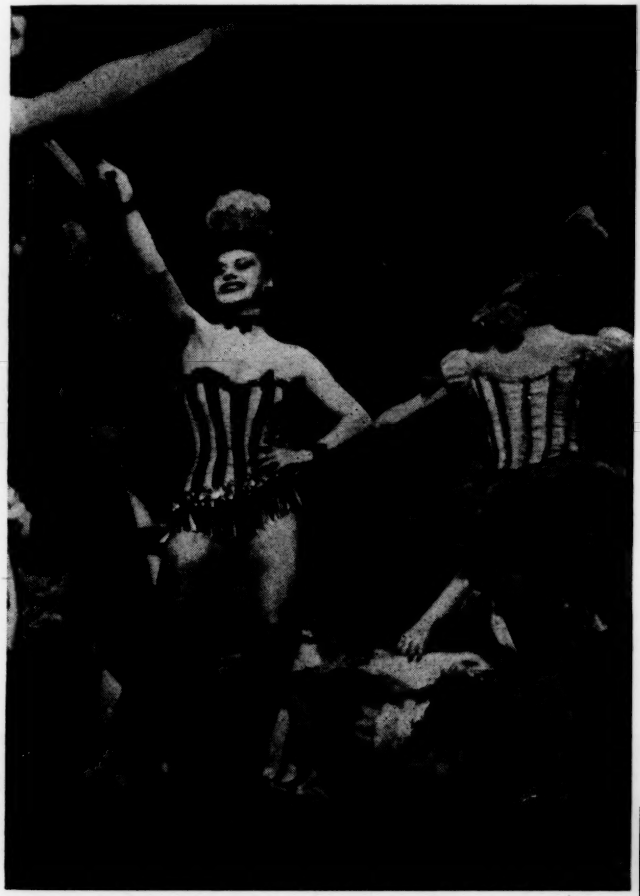
If there is any quibbling to do, it is to wonder whether John Wray's choreography is confused, or whether it is this department that is confused. His ballets are energetic and acrobatic and somehow unrewarding. At times, his stage is so cluttered that you can't see the forest for the trees. Maria Karnilova and David Nillo dance with grace and vitality in an interpretive mood, but perhaps it is typical of *Call Me Mister* that the vigorous tap routines of Bill Callahan and Betty Lou Holland draw a more enthusiastic reception.

For *Call Me Mister* is not a "glamour" show. It takes a look at the ordinary guy, just home from the wars, pokes fun at him, waxes sentimental about him, and even grows indignant over those who would keep him from getting the good things of life that are coming to him. The only time it gets on a high horse is when it examines a Park Avenue family at Yuletide—and then merely to give it a high-horse laugh. *Call Me Mister* is that kind of revue. And a damned good one, too.

Marie McDonnell and Harold Laing in the "Kenosha Canoe" number of "Three to Make Ready"—a take-off on the "Oklahoma" style of Broadway ballet musical, Agnes de Mille and all.

Bob Golby

SHOTS FROM SHOWS

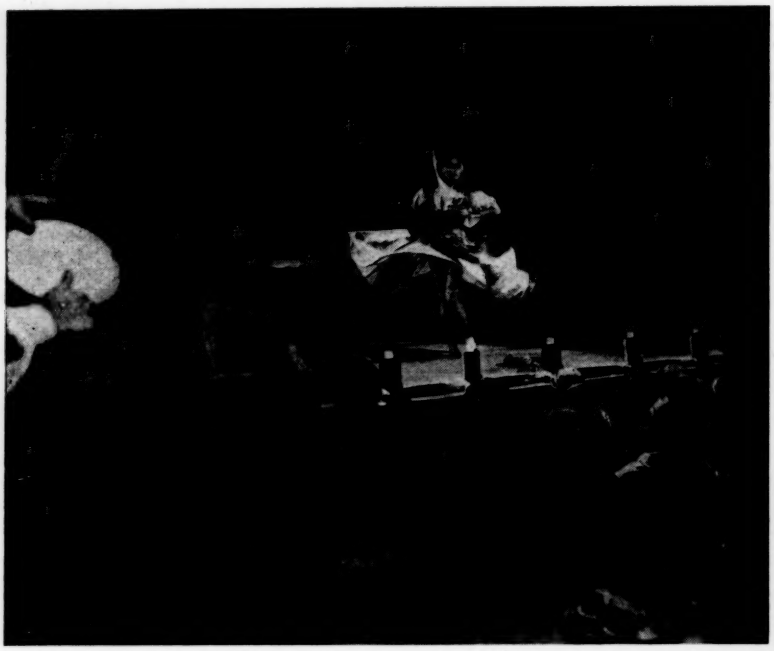


Bob Golby

Left: Buffalo Bill and the ballet are blended by Helen Tamiris in "Annie Get Your Gun." Lubov Roudenko is the choreographic cowgirl. The legs of the ensemble and the steed in the background poster remain anonymous.

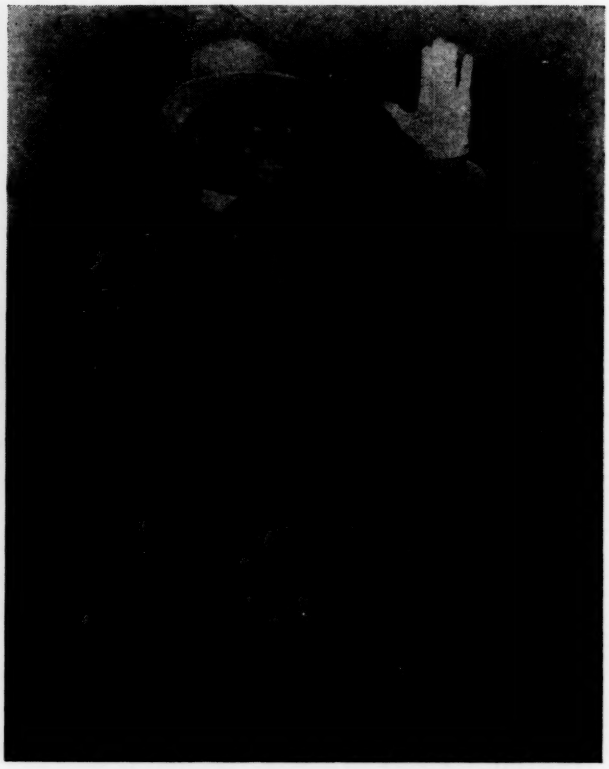
Fred Fehl

Bill Callahan and Betty Lou Holland are the bright dancing stars of "Call Me Mister." Here they are tapping their way through "A Home of Our Own" to music from Harold Rome's score.



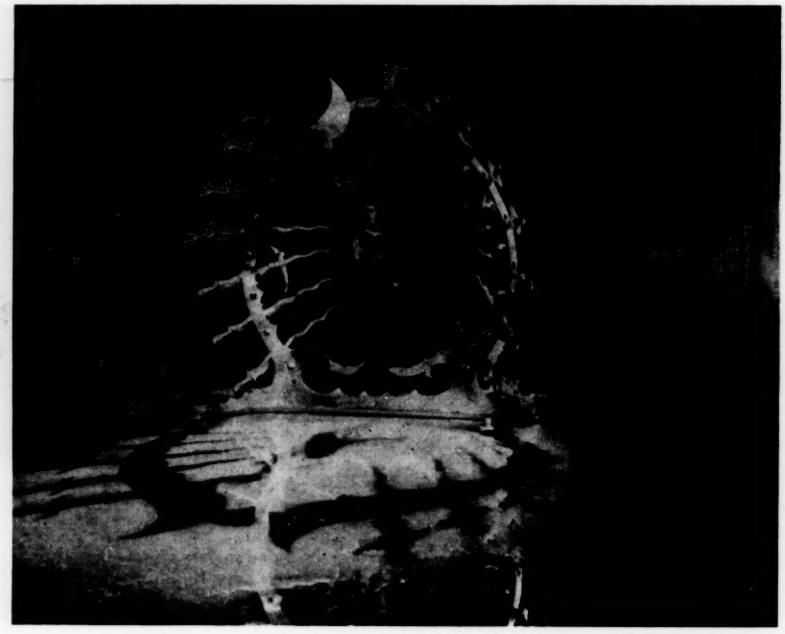
That is Yvonne de Carlo, the Technicolor temptress, behind that veil as she wiggles for the Arab customers in an oriental cafe—all from Universal's forthcoming "Fandango."

Larry Parks portraying Al Jolson in Columbia's forthcoming musical based on the life of the mammy singer.



Pert June Allyson hoofs it as a Bowery belle in "Two Sisters from Boston," the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer musical.

Belita, who is no icicle, does a hair-raising split on skates from a back take-off through a hoop of knives. No wonder Monogram calls her latest motion picture vehicle "Suspense."



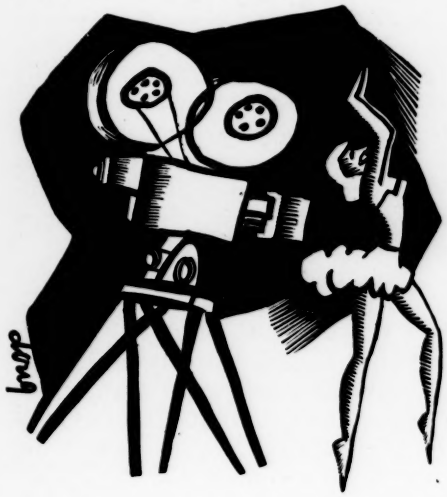
...And Selected Short Subjects

words and music—and just words; Monogram triumphs over MGM

by Ezra Goodman

By the law of strictly diminishing returns, the past month's film fare finds Belita, the skating siren, making a bunch of monkeys out of such distinguished artistes as Lillian Hellman, Lauritz Melchior, George Jessel, Gregory Ratoff, Mitchell Leisen and Charles Brackett. Belita's vehicle, a Monogram whodunit entitled *Suspense,* represents the ascendancy of mind over matter, the former, in this instance, being cinematic inventiveness, and the latter the picture's production cost. *Suspense* is announced by Monogram as its "first million-dollar production," which still makes it half as expensive—and twice as good—as Paramount's *The Searching Wind,* from the Lillian Hellman play; Metro-Goldwyn Mayer's *Two Sisters from Boston,* starring Kathryn Grayson, June Allyson, Jimmy Durante and Lauritz Melchior; Twentieth Century-Fox's *Do You Love Me?* produced by George Jessel and directed by Gregory Ratoff; and Charles Brackett's Paramount production of *To Each His Own,* directed by Mitchell Leisen.

Suspense bears the imprimatur of the King Brothers, the ingenious gentlemen who in 1944 turned out a topnotch thriller, *The Unknown Guest,* at a cost that wouldn't buy you one reel of José Iturbi in Technicolor. The theory on which the King Brothers operate is that one idea in the scenario is worth one million dollars in sets and production value. Instead of going in for decor, they concentrate on characterization and cohesiveness. In *Suspense* they have blended ice skating and murder in entirely satisfactory fashion. With Frank Tuttle, an old hand at this sort of stuff, directing from Philip Yordan's screenplay, with Belita looking very calorific on ice, and with such supporting players as Barry Sullivan, Albert Dekker and Eugene Palette, *Suspense,* strangely enough for Hollywood, manages to live up to its title. Nick Castle's choreography is excitingly inventive, and Belita and her gravity-defying ballet corps on blades make a Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo look like flies struggling in molasses.



The Searching Wind

The Searching Wind is one of those pictures for which high-minded critics are supposed to cheer, namely one with Significance. Miss Hellman's play has to do with boy-meets-girl against an international backdrop that ranges from the rise of fascism in Italy to Mussolini's death at the hands of Italian patriots. Hal Wallis, one of Hollywood's few producers of genuine taste and ability, has lavished every resource on this twenty-three-year panorama of a world between wars, but Miss Hellman's drama is lacking in depth and decisiveness. She has some worthwhile things to say in *The Searching Wind,* but her statements are not sufficiently searching. A competent cast, headed by Ann Richards, Robert Young and Sylvia Sidney, is dwarfed by Albert Basserman in the role of a richly corrupt and cynical Nazi diplomat. In a performance that lasts only a few minutes, Mr. Basserman wraps up the picture with an overwhelming authoritativeness that makes his fellow players look ludicrously like amateurs.

Two Sisters From Boston

M-G-M's *Two Sisters from Boston* has a Gay Nineties setting, Kathryn Grayson and June Allyson as the sisters, Lauritz Melchior in several operatic renditions from Liszt and Mendelssohn, and Jimmy Durante, Ben Blue and Ben Lessy on the comic side. The sheer weight of Mr. Melchior and the production values of the picture prevent it from being the buoyant thing it was undoubtedly intended to be. Miss Grayson looks too pretty, particularly in a Bowery setting, and she sings much too prettily. Miss

Allyson is not the ingratiating gamin she has been in previous pictures. The good things in *Two Sisters from Boston* are Durante, Blue and Lessy, and their contribution is more Slapsie Maxie's than Gay Nineties.

Do You Love Me?

A surplus of set decorations, authors and songwriters and a paucity of talent are some of the troubles of *Do You Love Me?.* This Technicolor musical is about the conservative and staid schoolteacher in tweeds and spectacles who turns into a ravishing beauty in reel three after a quick visit to a coutouriere and a beauty parlor. Since the young lady in question is played by Maureen O'Hara, the more perceptive

(continued on page 42)

People of Note

a minority report on "Call Me Mister"; Shakespeare, Toscanini, dope on discs

by Barry Ulanov

All New York greeted *Call Me Mister* with an ecstasy verging on hysteria. This revue of the ruptured eagle, ex-GI in everything except the greenbacks which gave it Broadway wings, occasioned such a tumult and a shouting that one would have thought another Aristophanes and been born, or at least a William Schwenk Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. I went to see it with what it is an understatement to call high expectancy.

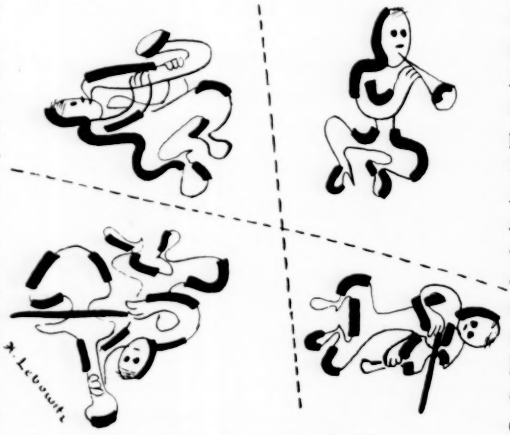
Ah, well, ecstasy comes cheap in New York. Everybody knows, of course, how jaded the denizens of this wicked city are. Only the jaded could and would accept such incompetence so enthusiastically. In a kind of wild reversal of form, the most blasé critics and audiences the theatre has anywhere in the world took a rawboned, gangly but not charming amateur to its bosom. Sets that only suggested sets, and with a scarcity of idea and paucity of technique rather than wit. And, to come at last to this department's subject, a dreary score.

Fifty percent of a musical comedy or revue, by definition, is its music. For me, at least, this half of *Call Me Mister* rates a round zero. While, occasionally, Harold Rome gave himself some felicitous lines, he never managed even four bars of unhackneyed or mildly eventful music. It is hard to prove the worn quality of songs, except by a minute inspection and analysis of intervals and phrases. But one of the strangest indications of the vitality of tune is their reception by musicians and then by the public at large. I suspect that the score of *Call Me Mister,* like those of too many musicals of recent years, will languish unloved and unplayed, except for the occasional performances the songpluggers will be able to wrest from bands and singers.

Musically, *Call Me Mister* has one asset. He is Lawrence Winters, a brilliant young baritone who made a brief appearance at Cafe Society Uptown this winter. Larry has that rare combination, a trained voice and a relaxed manner. His voice is even, clear, robust; he is never pompous about popular songs. That is a great deal to get from a singer trained in Moussorgsky, now singing Rome. It is not enough, unfortunately, to make a triumph of this trivia.

Henry IV

A much more satisfactory excursion into theatre music was *Henry IV,* Parts One and Two. An unexpected beauty of the Shakespeare of the fastidious Old Vic theatre company, currently rounding up its six-week season in America, was the music of Herbert Menges. Properly confined to brief overtures and dramatic highlighting (perhaps "highsounding" is the better word), the music really gives even greater stature than their performances already possess to Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier and their colleagues. Mr. Menges makes adroit use of tympani and strings pizzicato, spots his trumpets and trombones and French



horns in brightly contrived blasts, and contrasts these intense sounds with soft woodwinds used in the manner of Henry Purcell or Henry Lawes. It is all most effective, a model of incidental music.

Just how wide a distribution the short film, *Hymn of the Nations,* will have is uncertain. That everybody who is at all interested in Toscanini or Verdi or simply good music should see it is undeniable. Made by the OWI in 1944, it presents Arturo Toscanini in his movie debut, conducting the opera *La Forza del Destino* and his *Hymn of All Nations.* The orchestra's performance under Toscanini is expectedly crisp, virile and full of histrionic majesty. It is assisted superbly by the tenor Jan Peerce and the Westminister Choir. The music as such, then, is altogether satisfying. There is, however, an overshadowing strength and beauty in Toscanini himself, in the warmth and vigor of his face, the passion of his gesture, the ardor of his eyes, as the camera returns again and again to the musicswept little figure at the front of the big band.

Records

The record companies return this month to the tried and true but, fortunately, not the trite. The closest they get to the latter undesirable level is Antonin Dvorak's *New World Symphony,* performed with a degree of grace by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy (Columbia Album M-570, $5.85), and the same composer's *Songs My Mother Taught Me,* beautifully sung in her native language by the Czech soprano, Jarmila Novotna (Victor 11-9153, $1). There are, of course, such sets as Andre Kostelanetz's *Music of Tchaikovsky* and the Radio City Music Hall *Souvenir Album,* but these are so carefully designed for the great unwashed of music, the straddlers who like neither jazz nor the large forms but only the nausea that lies between, that to consider them seriously would be a violation of business ethics and an invitation to apoplexy.

There is moving music and singing in the Bach Choir of Bethlehem's Cantata, *Jesus, Thou My Wearied Spirit* (Victor DM-1045, $4.85) but only good music in E. Power Biggs' set of *Bach Organ Music* (Victor DM-1048, $4.85), in which the spirit is not only weary but

(*Continued on page* 49)

Gerda Peterich

Excitement at the Zanzibar: Maurice Rocco (left) at the piano; Bill Robinson, who recently celebrated his sixtieth anniversary in show business, was the club's headliner in May.

Light & Fantastic

notes on Berle, Barnet, Gibbs, Green; quips and quotes on the after-hour beat

by Paul Denis

MASTERS and Rollins, the comedy dancers, recall when they were appearing in *George White's Scandals* and played the roles of a grandmother and a bum in one of the skits.

One day, they had their daughter Barbara, then three, on the train with them. A kindly old lady asked little Barbara, "And what do your parents do?" The child answered, with great truth, "Mommy is a grandmother and daddy is a bum."

* * *

Larry Shayne, who with Dick Haymes and Bill Burton, owns Beverly Music Company, was complaining to bandleader Charlie Barnet that he hadn't played their new tune, "Everyone's Saying Hello Again." Barnet explained, "I don't like one of your partners."

Shayne argued, "But why make the other two partners suffer! Now, be fair!" So Barnet played fair. He's been playing two-thirds of the song: thirteen out of the song's twenty bars.

Georgia Gibbs, radio singer, went to Hollywood and discovered that jokes about the housing shortage were in great demand. "Something's got to keep you laughing while you sleep in Union Station."

* * *

Larry Finley, Coast ballroom owner known throughout show business because he beat Music Corporation of America in court, is a spectacular person. Once, when he wanted to attract attention to his jewelry store in Syracuse, he brought in an elephant and gave it a hot foot. Another time, when he wanted to play a joke on Olsen and Johnson in Chicago, he led two cows into the theatre and let them roam the aisles.

* * *

"I am now going to do a soft shoe dance," says Roy Sedley, the zany comic at New York's Club 18, "And remember I've got gallstones. Now if you're quiet, you'll hear them rattle."

Milton Berle and Ken Kling, the horse racing expert, dined at Ciro's Restaurant and Kling grabbed the check. "All right, then," said Berle, "if you won't let me pay, then give me a bad tip."

* * *

Jackie Green tells the story about the man who stopped off at the corner saloon every night and drank away most of his salary. Finally, his wife caught him there and started to scream at him. He calmed her down and persuaded her to drink a Scotch and soda "because that's the only thing I drink here Saturday nights."

She drank the Scotch, burned her throat, gasped, and shrieked, "This is awful stuff."

"See," exclaimed the happy husband, "and you've been thinking I've been enjoying myself Saturday nights!"

* * *

Irving Windisch, the Strand Theatre, New York, wag, says I should now spell it Paul Denishawn.

Nights Out

Charles Trenet—a crooner from France; Hildegarde—a chanteuse from Milwaukee

by Sid Garfield

One Broadway columnist, noting the enthusiasm for Charles Trenet at the Embassy, suggested that "for all concerned, it looks like the beginning of a beautiful Frenchship." You may not approve the phrasing, but one thing is undeniable: Trenet is standing the Embassy customers on their ears. His reception is much the same as Frank Sinatra's was when Sinatra first burst from comparative obscurity at the very same site then known as the Riobamba.

Trenet, a husky, blondish young man from the south of France—the publicity releases say he is thirty—keeps a stiff lower lip and nervously crushes a white, soft hat as he sings along. A definitive estimate of his talents would have to recognize the fact that he is a one hundred percent smash. Without doubt, the trans-Atlantic channels will soon swell with traffic of French male singers coming over to begin a trend which Trenet has surely started in the cafe circuits.

The young man sings with staggering charm and intimacy, and almost completely in French. The night we dropped by, he held the floor for forty minutes and delivered just one English tune, the continental item with a Harold Rome lyric, called "Suddenly My Heart Sings." All the other Trenet songs are little French bits, mostly of his own authorship with such assorted titles as "J'ai Tal Main," "Si Tu Vas a Paris," "Pres De Toi Mon Amour," "Je Fais La Course Avec Le Train," and the Gallic like. You needn't worry about not understanding the little lyric dramas of each. We didn't and had a pleasant time, nevertheless.

Like Maurice Chevalier, Trenet is a constant smiler with the same sort of unceasing eye twinkle, plus an amusing habit of signalling the climax of each tune by waving his hand in a "come on" gesture to his musical accompaniment, and then really letting go. The Embassy must think very highly of him.

There are two men to manage the spotlights in back of the room, and there is no serving of food or liquor while he is on, not even surreptitiously. You may safely assume that in a very short time, cafe mimics will be impersonating Trenet, and radio comics will be using him for scriptual ammunition.

Persian Room

At this late date, a report on Hildegarde's activities would seem pretty excessive. And we are not living in *that* much of a fool's Paradise to believe anything we could write here would make any difference. A Hildegarde fan is like a Brooklyn Dodger enthusiast; no printed word could make the slightest difference in degree of customer enthusiasm or apathy. In full cry at the Plaza's Persian Room, Hildegarde has been there on and off now for the past four years. She is still dragging reluctant, tired financiers from their ringside seats right onto the floor for some coy dialogue and a gift of a "Hildegarde Rose." In limping quantities, she serves up standard Gershwin and Kern roundelays and, for good measure, throws in a brief concert recital of Strauss waltzes. The customers applaud madly as she pirouettes around the floor for her final bows, and we could almost imagine a few gallants rushing outside to Central Park for an open barouche to escort her home. For our own part, we find some of her precious maneuvers a bit embarrassing to look at and listen to. At any rate, you may go ahead and make a bet at almost any odds that the lady will be back at the Plaza next year and with most of the same crowd in attendance. Incidentally, the night we were there, a ringside couple kept shouting loudly for "Auld Lang Syne," proving there is no limit to the manner in which Hildegarde can move her legions.

China Doll

The China Doll is a lavishly done-up cafe. Oriental lanterns swing nicely by attractive, red walls and the gay murals about the place are striking enough for anyone's taste. There's just one fault, though. What the principals in the show do is no more Oriental than a George M. Cohan cakewalk. The usual night spot cafe staples are all here—the control dancer, the ballroom team, the torch singer, right down to the conferencier who, at the show's finale, asks you to "give a nice hand to the boys in the band who worked so hard." The involved talents are commendable, but you should not go expecting diversion of any startlingly new stripe. Outside of a rickshaw bringing dancer Mara Kim onto the floor, and a juggler who spins plates on a stick and pushes broad ribbons about the room, you won't find any. Accepting this condition, you may find some pleasurable moments. The newspaper advertisements are correct—the girls are really exotic and attractive, and the food, especially the char sue dow foo, is a credit to the kitchen. Wing and Ling, ballyhooed "Chinese hillbilly team," could not appear the night we were over, because of laryngitis. The management never told us whose throat was ailing, Mr. Wing's or Mr. Ling's.

The Havana-Madrid roster is lively enough if you're one of those who simply cannot live without an occasional visit to a Latin-American cafe. Ciro-Rimac provides a spirited musical background for all the dancing specialties, and throws in a few steps of his own.

Star System

(*continued from page* 24)

Why is it that audiences applaud when Markova steps onto the stage in *Giselle?* She hasn't danced yet and she hasn't accomplished anything at that specific performance to warrant applause, but she is acclaimed because she is Markova and because her presence gives promise (based upon the audience's previous experiences with her) of an evening of fine dancing. Audiences do the same with Ethel Barrymore or Grace Moore or Bert Lahr, and it is understandable and inevitable. The critic may not sigh when there is a sudden change of cast, for he is eager to find the new and the fresh, but somebody who has paid hard-earned cash for a seat at the theatre wants to see the star he knows or the one who "got all the good reviews"—he just isn't eager to gamble on an unfamiliar artist.

On occasion, the star system is inevitable from the artistic angle. Martha Graham is very much the star of her company and many of her dance works would be unpresentable without her. Her leading character may be Emily Dickenson, a Bronte or simply a female figure, but they have all been conceived, molded and treated by the chemistries of Graham herself. Certainly the forty-year-old ballet, *Radha,* could not and should not be performed by anyone but Ruth St. Denis, and Sybil Shearer's *In a Vacuum* can exist only through her dancing. There are, then, roles and dances which require the presence of a specific star. If they are great works, as well as exclusively personal ones, they afford the star system an irrefutable reason for being, and *Letter to the World, Radha* and *In a Vacuum* are great dance works.

Fred Fehl

Nora Kaye "muggs" to the audience in "Gala Performance," Tudor's satire on ballerinas.

Fred Fehl

As it should be done. Nora Kaye and Hugh Laing direct their dancing towards each other in the lyrical and nostalgic "Lilac Garden."

It is apparent, I think, that the star system, in spite of its evils, has many valid reasons for being; further it is ineradicable. The next step is to make it better than it is today in its present form, and this can be done only by recognizing its merits and by obliterating its most flagrant flaws. These merits and flaws I have already attempted to itemize, but I would like to suggest a possible program for reforming the star system: (1) in publicity, accent the ballet or the dance work itself; (2) in all dance organizations which are not headed by a single star-dancer-choreographer and which are not built around works created for a specific performer, try to make the name of the company as important as that of any single performer; (3) in ballet repertories particularly, rotation of roles among all capable dancers, and not merely the headliners, should be inaugurated; (4) when a new ballet or modern dance work is being cast, see that the most worthy contender, regardless of company rank, gets the principal role. I fully realize that these points constitute hurdles, for stars mean good box office and stars are very often worthy of all the attention they receive, but such a program would help, I believe, to lessen the ills of the system while in no way detracting from its obvious merits. In the balletic field, for example, we could go on cheering and cherishing the achievements of a Markova or a Danilova, plugging for such rising artists as Muriel Bentley and Herbert Bliss, yet knowing that perhaps tomorrow night, thanks to democratic casting, a new star might be born.

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Burlesque

(*continued from page* 13)

usually three or four of them besides the star and they wear typical low comedy make-up—false noses, scare wigs, grotesque hats, gun-boat shoes and bulky pantaloons, always on the verge of dropping. They tell off-color stories or take part in the comedy sketches called "bits," hold-overs from medieval anecdotes and barroom gags, but now called "blackouts" and motion picture sketches.

The audience knows all the jokes beforehand, but the better they know them the louder the applause. They love also the trick apparatus, the dentist chair in which the phony physician pummels the poor patient to a pulp, the counterfeit money, the slapstick and the bladders.

Something happens every moment. When the soprano soloist sings a sentimental number, everybody joins in. When the acrobat misses, the crowd shouts, "Get the hook." Sometimes a couple of fellows start an altercation among themselves and the "cop" rushes up unexpectedly.

When the chorus marches down the runway, the courageous guys beg for a garter, or slip them a mash note. The spirit is gay and abandoned. The eternal male disports himself happily in this world of accessible women.

The high point of the performance is the Extra Added Attraction, the Hootchy-

Ethel Lieberman

Kootchy, a pseudo-oriental muscle dance performed to the accompaniment of cheers, cat-calls and applause. Since the First World War, however, this number has been displaced by the strip tease, also a pariah divertissement, but now, thanks to the expert Gypsy Rose Lee, worthy of mention in the Social Register.

Sometimes the Extra Added Attraction is a strong man who lifts weights that are are not as weighty as they seem. Sometimes ex-champions of the ring come on for a brief bout after which they offer to take on anyone in the audience.

The show concludes with an Amazon parade in which the ladies of the chorus wear white tights and carry flags as a tribute to abstract patriotism or what have you.

It is true that burlesque, like every other form of entertainment, has its faults. Unscrupulous managers have made the name synonymous with obscenity, and this is a pity. For burlesque is really popular-priced musical comedy and revue. Just a little editing could make it ideal entertainment for the wholy family. Clean up the show by eliminating indecency. Cut down the number of strip tease artists. Improve the dancing, the music, the settings and the public will have a fine new recreation spot.

Most of the great comedians of this era are graduates from burlesque: W. C. Fields, Leon Erroll, Will Rogers, Bert Lahr, Weber and Fields, Bobby Clark, Jack Pearl, Abbott and Costello, James Barton, Sophie Tucker, Fannie Brice, Fred Stone and Al Jolson. An impressive list, but most of these notables, alas, are growing older. Some of these have already deserted the stage and their successors are lamentably few.

When burlesque, however, is established under the right conditions it will again become the ideal school for comedy. The young crop of comics will burgeon forth. The supply of laughter will be increased, and radio, stage and screen will be refreshed with new talent.

The need for entertainment these days is urgent, incalculable. The regular citizen seeks a refuge from renting problems, income tax, and involved business worries. The returned soldier craves an escape from terrible memories.

Recently the Actor's Equity, certainly the loftiest American exponent of stage art, appealed to the mayor of New York City to re-open the burlesque theatres. Every mayor in every city in the land should receive a similar appeal, asking him to foster this too-long despised art, this original source of America's greatest risibility artists. Burlesque, the poor man's paradise, must go on!

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Music and Dance

(continued from page 28)

Certainly there is infinitely more profound searching to be done in any one aspect of this tangled question. These remarks are merely teasers. Only think, for example, of the idea "representational" in terms of the subtle psychic life of the artist: what an unexplored field lies there! Perhaps one day we shall attain to a new meaning of Meaning, in a new frame of reference which is intangible to us now. But for the present we "abstract" artists, we musicians and dancers have this to say to ourselves: Relax. Invent. Perform. Have fun.

Movies

(continued from page 35)

moviegoer will not be particularly astonished by the transformation. The rest of *Do You Love Me?* has to do with another unique subject, the battle between classical music and swing, with the finis finding Harry James conducting what seems to be a 108-piece orchestra in a symphonic arrangement of "St. Louis Blues," and with Dick Haymes at the microphone. It says, in the screen credits, that the dances were staged by Seymour Felix.

To Each His Own

If it is schmaltz you relish, then *To Each His Own* is your particular deep dish. This is one of those flashback affairs with Olivia DeHavilland being noble as the mother of an illegitimate child whose father is killed in action in World War I. The boy grows up not knowing his mother's identity and it is not until the second World War in which the son is a flier, like his father, that the crisis of events leads to the long self-sacrificing mother and her son being reunited. There is a certain Freudian interest generated by the fact that John Lund plays both Miss DeHavilland's lover and her son. And what does all this have to do with dancing? Nothing. It doesn't even have anything to do with movies.

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THE UNSUNG UNDERSTUDY

Virginia Gorski hopes to become a "Billion Dollar Baby" on her own

Gerda Peterich

One lass has the lead—the other could play it at a moment's notice. Joan McCracken (left) and her understudy, Virginia Gorski, pose in similar costumes from "Billion Dollar Baby."

VIRGINIA GORSKI, a St. Louis lass, crashed Broadway as a chorus girl in *The Connecticut Yankee* three years ago. Now, as Joan McCracken's understudy in *Billion Dollar Baby*, she hoofs it in the line and has an understudy of her own in case she should step up to the lead and leave a vacancy in the chorus.

Half Irish, half Polish, Virginia was picked for the understudy stint not because of any resemblance to Joan McCracken, but because of her ability to sing, dance and emote. Recently she nearly played the lead in *Billion Dollar Baby* when Joan McCracken had an impacted wisdom tooth. "I rehearsed like mad for three days," she says. "But then the dentist decided not to pull Joanie's tooth, so I didn't get to do the part."

This summer, Virginia's family is coming to town to see her behind the footlights. "It would be wonderful if I could do Joanie's part while they are here," she says hopefully. If that happens, for at least one performance Broadway's unsung understudy will become Broadway's billion dollar baby. D. B.

Left: Sadler's Wells Ballet in Brussels. Right: Tony Williams and Franklin White in Paris.

SADLER'S WELLS

the post-war British ballet thrives on a democratic basis

AFTER years of visiting war-scarred British towns and army camps, trips to Holland and Belgium in 1940, and to Belgium, France and Germany in 1945, the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company has settled down in its new home, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and established a record in that famous building by filling it to capacity every night.

During the war, the scope of the ballet was being widened despite the fact that twenty-four of its young men were called up and the company was bombed out of Sadler's Wells Theatre. In a tour which lasted twelve weeks the troupe gave performances in Paris, Brussels, London and Berlin.

"At one time, after an eleven hours' journey from the coast to Brussels in motor coaches," Mis de Valois, director, recalls, "we arrived to find the capital blanketed in five inches of snow, with no heating either in hotels or theatres. All the dancers wore battle-dress — thick khaki suits, top-coats and mufflers. I remember, in *Les Sylphides* where the girls have to hold various static poses, noticing their taut self-control in trying to eliminate their shivers as they stood in ballet dresses in an ice-cold theatre."

At the moment, the outstanding success at Covent Garden is a revival of Tchaikowsky's *Sleeping Princess*. Meanwhile, at Sadler's Wells, a second company, the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, has begun operations with a new work, *La Belle Assemblee*. This ensemble, largely composed of sixteen and eighteen-year-old youngsters will dance the more intimate ballets considered too small for Covent Garden. Thus a dancer of talent can graduate from the Ballet School into the Sadler's Wells company, and thence into the Covent Garden company. And so, thanks largely to the energy and enthusiasm of Ninette de Valois, a real English school of dancing has arisen, comparable in many respects to the State Ballet of Russia. JOAN LITTLEFIELD

Left: Tony Williams and Franklin White in Paris. Right: Sadler's Wells Ballet in Brussels.

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Folk Dancing

(continued from page 10)

time. The way the audience mingles with the star performers would shock a ballerina.

The Festival at Cleveland this year was the first to have large numbers of ex-GIs as participants. Many of the soldiers learned their folk dancing in Europe and the Pacific area and are returning as enthusiasts. And they have stories to tell. A boy from Kansas met an attractive Polish refugee girl somewhere in France. Neither could speak the other's language, nor had they any language in common. Well, not quite, because the word "dance" is similar in almost every language.

There is a thrill and understanding that grows out of working through the

dance patterns together. It comes, too, in watching this great, democratic Festival where hundreds of dancers present the cultural dances of as many nationalities, and in knowing that it's All-American now.

Few Americans know the U. S. government officially recognized folk dancing and sent to all parts of Europe OWI movies showing Americans doing the folk dances of many nations. This was one of the most effective ways of overcoming Nazi propaganda that Americans are "barbarians."

Today in Europe there is little time for dancing. Immediately before the peoples of the world is the tremendous task of repairing and rebuilding in the wake of a terrible war. Many of them are engaged in a deadly struggle against famine. But the national dances of the various cultures are safely being kept by the folk dancing groups of America. The Folk Festival in Cleveland is our show window and everybody's dancin'.

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African Dancing

(Continued from page 15)

The time element is of little importance in the African dance. The dancer dances till he stops of his own free will, falls exhausted, or is carried out of the dance circle in a trance. A dance may go on three minutes or eight days or more. New groups of dancers relieve the exhausted. In this—the time element—those of us who endeavor to bring to the Western mind anything of African dancing are confronted by an insuperable obstacle. The idea of an audience sitting in Carnegie Hall watching a dance for eight days is not a very feasible one.

There is no audience, as such, in Africa. Even where trained dancers may begin or end a dance, the entire group at one time or another actually takes part in the activity. In certain solo dances the crowd acts as inspiration—cheering, singing, and clapping hands to the rhythm of the drums.

Here in America we face an audience unschooled in the art of African dancing. There is no jungle atmosphere—no fires —no sweating and cheering companions —no night hanging soft and dark above us. We are not honestly invoking rain, for should it fall on our well dressed audience, pandemonium would result. Stagehands whispering, footlights glaring, curtains which may or may not work, and what's more, a costume which at its most authentic is still designed to meet the approval of our audience—these are some of the factors with which we have to reckon.

What then must the dancer do? How can he speak? He must analyze carefully that eight day dance, extract from it the essence, and present it in three to eight minutes. It is little wonder that so many who are less patient insult the dance and present to the audience the obscene in the guise of African art.

The true African dance is basic in subject matter: birth, death, puberty rites, marriage, hailing a new chief, discovering evil spirts, detecting criminals, praying for rain, sun, strong children, good harvests, good hunting, victory in warfare, success in love, revenge, protection of the gods, honoring the ancestors, and play; and, were they dancing today as they once did, there would be the dances of social protest—against powers which take but give so little in return.

This basic African dance, according to Mr. Gorer, is divided into three main groups under the general heading of Pantomime.

The first is the straightforward imitation of animals or people. Here the dancers wear masks. Masks of Africa are sacred, made with great skill and care and painted very elaborately with brilliant vegetable dyes. Some of them are as large as ten feet across, some five feet high, some wooden, some inlaid with silver. The entire body is covered, except for the hands and feet. It is impossible to recognize someone so costumed. The dancers usually do their imitations so well that they often outmimic the animal or person portrayed.

Another type is the dance for the "emotion the dancers hope to feel after they have danced." The war dances, dynamic, done in unison with an accuracy and precision which would make many a Radio City Rockette fan pause in admiration, create in the warriors such a feeling of power that the enemy becomes insignificant in their eyes.

And finally "representation of abstractions—of the forces of nature, of depersonalized gods." Sorcery is included here.

But, above all the African dance has excitement, fire and color. Mr. Gorer has caught that color in these paragraphs:

"—from the esthetic point of view the most spectacular and beautiful were the dances of Nesshoué, the river. The Nesshoué are always in very great company and elaborately dressed in many cloths of different but harmonious tone, avoiding all pure colors except blue and green. They wear chased silver daggers at their waists, and on their arms are cunningly worked armlets and bracelets in solid silver; the men carrying sossyabi with the ax-like blade in silver, the women carrying horses' tails silver mounted.

"Their dances are mostly slow and undulating, after the character of a river; they dance together so that their very clothing looks like a bed of living flower, their silver ornaments sparkling like dew. Against the background of the blue sky and palms, with occasional trees of a deeper green, and scarlet fruit, the effect is of the greatest beauty. Sometimes they dance in lines and sometimes in single file, but always with the strictest rhythm and coordination. There is only one dance which is done individually. Perhaps the most lovely of all their dances is the Salili, or gleaning dance—the river makes the harvest. In a long line they hold their sossyabi and fans parallel with the ground, and with one leg stretched behind them they dance with a quick undulating movement, gradually gathering speed till they seem like a sea wave."

This art—the magnificent communion of the body with the black hands on the tom-toms — is fast disappearing at its source, for the land no longer belongs to the people. The African dance has been preserved almost unchanged in Haiti and the Guianas. It is preserved but so disguised as to be practically unrecognizable in the churches of the South. Here in our own country is a fertile field for research in a little known subject of major dance importance.

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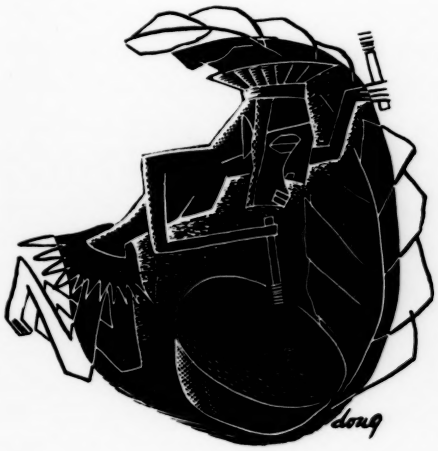

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Music

(continued from page 36)

utterly secular as the chorale and chorale-prelude and passacaglia and fugues involved never are. Joseph Szigeti's incomparable interpretation of the *Brahms Violin Concerto* is at last available in a modern recording (with the Philadelphia) which reproduces his playing with something of the serenity and the tensile strength which the original has (Columbia MM-603, $5.85). There is great fun in the set of Polkas by the various members of the Strauss family of Vienna of last century, Johanns, Sr. and Jr., Josef and Eduard, rattled off with contagious zest by the Boston Pops Orchestra (Victor M-1049, $3). And if you insist, you can have Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* (Victor DM-1046, $4), in which Martha Graham's staccato movements are set to music which is still more abrupt and fragmentary. It's a dry, cold Spring in Copland's mountains in which no young man's fancy would lightly turn to thought of love, except of a very questionable sort.

Who's Who

DOROTHY BARRET was a professional dancer before she retired to become a writer.

JOHN GROTH, regular contributor to *Dance*, is a noted artist who has appeared in *Esquire, New Yorker, Colliers* and other national magazines.

BARTON HENDERSON gave up dancing after a leg injury. He was recently discharged from the army.

DORIS HERING is one of *Dance's* regular reviewers of modern dance.

PHILIP K. SCHEUER is film critic for the Los Angeles *Times* and covers Hollywood for *Dance*.

BERNARD SOBEL, author of *Burlecue* and *The Theatre Handbook*, has been a college professor, publicist for Florenz Ziegfeld and drama critic for *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

WALTER TERRY is dance critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

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Baron

The opening tableau of "Symphonic Variations" premiered by the Saddler's Wells Company. Left to right: Henry Danton, Moira Shearer, Michael Somes, Margot Fonteyn, Pamela May, Brian Shaw.

Dance REVIEWS

On May 11 the curtain not only rang down on another ballet season at the Metropolitan Opera House, but closed another chapter of Ballet Theatre's colorful history. The next chapter will be written in London.

The Met season displayed the various tendencies developed by the company since 1941. There was the many faceted repertory—Russian, American, British—modern and classical, dated and avant-garde. There were the stars—imported and indigenously developed. And there was the best corps since the days of the Center Theatre opening. But this massive structure creaked at the joints and lacked the freshness of its beginnings.

The only new work shown this Spring was a pas de deux arranged by Anatole Oboukhoff to music by Tcherepnine from Pavilion d'Armide. It was cast in the classical mold both as to form and content and tailored to the technical heights of Alicia Alonso and Andre Eglevsky who danced it with their usual complete mastery of physical problems and with an understanding of balletic movement beyond mere correct technique.

The rest of the Ballet Theatre's story is that of its dancers—its repertory has been adequately discussed. Stars Markova and Dolin, besides being good box-office, gave fine performances. Markova under-dances most roles, never underlining virtuosity for its own sake. Hers is the light touch that the very word dance evokes. Dolin, aside from being the supreme partner in classical ballets, is expert at making his presence felt in flamboyant pieces like *Bluebeard* and *Fair at Sorochinsk*. He is thoroughly a man of the theatre and a master of stage technique.

Alicia Alonso, Nora Kaye and Janet Reed are worthy of the leading positions they hold. Alonso danced *Giselle* and won an ovation that only a great performance can inspire. Her Terpsichore in *Apollo* was the high point of that great ballet.

Nora Kaye emerges as a stronger dancer than ever this year. Added to a strong technique is the very personal dramatic quality she conveys. And it is not a matter of mime. She has a very plastic, expressive body that communicates dance ideas beyond gesture and facial grimace.

Janet Reed has made for herself a very special niche in ballet. She establishes a sympathetic bond with the audience outside the mere characterization of a role. As an actress she projects beyond the footlights and her dancing is technically strong and lyric.

Lucia Chase, in the few parts in which she appeared, always showed an intelligent understanding of the role. She can be very moving and her satire is biting.

John Kriza has come further than any other male dancer in Ballet Theatre, one can almost say in America. Starting in the corps de ballet he has deservedly climbed to the top. He is very versatile, and his most attractive quality is the air of ease with which he carries everything off. His comic flair depends on movement rather than on make-up or mugging.

Michael Kidd has a good sense of theatre as well as the dance ability to put across the many roles he has inherited. John Taras and Dimitri Romanoff did not dance as much as they have in the past, but their appearances always carry a note of authority.

Two young girls who started out in the back line of the crops de ballet a few years ago and are now doing leading roles well are Barbara Fallis and Margaret Banks. Fallis has beautiful fluid movements. Margaret Banks, as good a turner as there is in the profession, seems to be relegated to a life of pirouettes.

Lovely Diana Adams has come to the fore rapidly. Her fine line and great lyricism are seen to advantage in a number of solo parts. It was good to see Muriel Bentley in dance roles in *Interplay* and *Graziana*. She has been doing shady ladies for so long we had forgotten she is a ballet dancer. Newcomer Mildred Herman and strong technician Shirley Eckl both stood out.

These are some of the people who made Ballet Theatre's season and were, for the most part, made by Ballet Theatre.

A. B.

Walter E. Owen

Bernice Samuels of Asadata Dafora's company.

Martha Graham

Martha Graham and Dance Company opened the Second Annual Festival of Contemporary American Music at Columbia University on May 10 with an interestingly contrasted program. The highlight of the occasion was, of course, the première performance of *Serpent Heart,* a new Graham work with music by Samuel Barber. The Graham-Barber collaboration was made possible by a grant from the Alice M. Ditson Fund, and the trustees should be more than happy with the results.

While one hearing does not indicate Mr. Barber's score to be as rich and colorful as Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* (also on the program) it is ideally suited to Miss Graham's taut style and added much to the dramatic element in the dance.

Serpent Heart, like all of Miss Graham's works, requires more than a single-performance acquaintance for an adequate appraisal of its various facets. Shorter and more compact than her recent group offerings, it follows logically the steady searching procession of *Letter to the World, Deaths and Entrances, Herodiade,* and *Dark Meadow.* In fact, certain characteristic movement patterns appear again. But they take on the guise of leitmotifs, rather than clichés, in Miss Graham's supremely artistic hands.

Because of its relatively simple structure, *Serpent Heart* has greater clarity and impact than its predecessors. The theme as outlined in the program notes is a "chronicle much like the myth of Jason . . . and Medea." It is a "dance of possessive and destroying love." Miss Graham, as One like Medea, provides the focal points in the action with her fierce solos that render entirely credible the macabre theme. The other figures in this Freudian myth are One like Jason (Erick Hawkins), Daughter of the King (Yuriko) and The Chorus (May O'Donnell). At this stage, Medea and Daughter of the King are the more clearly projected roles. The relationship between the three protagonists and the Chorus has yet to be established.

Yuriko, with her impeccable technique and sensitive acting, formed a fine foil to Miss Graham's dark, jealousy-wracked creature. The contrast was visually enhanced by Yuriko's brief, faintly classical white costume and Miss Graham's serpent-traced black one. Incidentally, Edith Gilfond has succeeded admirably in catching the subtle fusion of classic and modern in all her costumes. The same can be said of Isamu Noguchi's decor with its queer little rock formations and wire funeral-pyre-like object so effective in the grim conclusion.

Lido

Irene Skorik, Christian Foye and Youra Loboff in the Ballets des Champs Elysees' production of "Jeu de Cartes" with music by Stravinsky.

Serpent Heart is not so inventive choreographically as *Dark Meadow,* its sister-work this season, but it has a basic solidity and purposefulness that should make it in time one of the outstanding items in Miss Graham's repertoire.

Appalachian Spring, the first offering on the program, has grown tremendously since its appearances on Broadway last February. The subtle interrelationships between the characters were brought to light as never before and produced a real drama of human experience, rather than just a sunny interlude.

Louis Horst did his usual fine job with the small orchestra. D. H.

Asadata Dafora

In conjunction with speeches, fund raising and guest artists, the African Academy of Arts and Research presented its Third Annual Festival of Dance and Music on April 25 and 26 at Carnegie Hall. As in previous years, the music and dances were arranged by Asadata Dafora from authentic African sources, and he did a praiseworthy job.

The production, *A Tale of Old Africa,* was in three scenes with continuity maintained by an unseen narrator. Using the slender story of a small West African kingdom before the white man's advent and how its soothsayer (colorfully portrayed by Abdul Essen) saved the natives from slavery, Mr. Dafora staged a prodigious number of incidental dances and songs. The first

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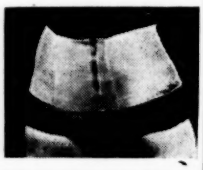

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half, containing such dance items as Onekari, Algerian Dance, Nigerian Dance, Temini Dance, Warrior's Dance of Excitement, Maiden's Play Dance, Bell Dance, Dance of Peace, and Ashiko, was interesting and comparatively varied. Costumes by Rosalia Horton and overall group formations, both of which were well above average, provided diversion when the choreography did not.

But in the second half, the action failed to maintain momentum and revealed a rhythmic and structural monotony. Authenticity became a liability, rather than a point of merit. One began to long for a stronger sense of theatre, for the mounting phrasing so welcome in modern forms of theatre dance. Solos by Princess Orelia and Bernice Samuels became mere unintegrated interludes. In short, it was just too much of a good thing.

Iris Mabry

Iris Mabry made her Broadway debut in a program of solo dances on May 7 at New York Times Hall—and she gave a thoroughly distinguished performance.

Miss Mabry is a dancer in the complete sense of the word. She approaches her problems kinetically and solves them in terms of pure movement. Secondary aspects remain secondary, and at no time obscure or replace the sheer dynamism of her dancing.

There is nothing static about Iris Mabry. Even when she is seemingly motionless, as in parts of *Witch Genesis,* one can sense the inner forces gathering to spring into movement. And once an impulse has been initiated, it is carried to a natural conclusion before a new pattern is begun. There are no loose ends, no tentative or hastily abandoned movements. The audience feels that the subject has been explored to its utmost.

Even *Rally* and *Blues,* the two weakest of her ten compositions, had much to recommend them in the way of simplicity of line. In her excursions into the well-travelled realms of neurosis (*Dreams* and *Dilemma*) and emotional catharsis (*Cycle*) she remained free of the influence of her many predecessors. And in her highly creative *Bird Spell, Litany,* and *Witch Genesis* her style and movement vocabulary were uniquely her own.

Music for six of the dances was composed by Ralph Gilbert, accompanist. The percussive repeated tones in *Witch Genesis* did much to build the tension, and the sprightly melody of *Scherzo* matched the dance in airiness. The Mabry-Gilbert debut certainly augurs well for their future. D. H.

College Dance

Our American system of higher education may not be flawless, but we can now name six colleges who know where they are going, at least as far as dance is concerned. They are Bennington, Sarah Lawrence, Bennett Junior College, Howard University, New York University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

The first two gave a recital on April 21 at the YMHA, New York, and the remainder took part in the Eighth Annual College Dance Demonstration at the same auditorium on April 28.

All proved conclusively that with a properly intelligent approach, professional talent is not necessarily prerequisite to an interesting and worthwhile performance. Costumes were simple (in most cases, clever variations on the ever-faithful leotard); accompaniments were varied and appropriate; and for the most part, the dances were well within the technical and intellectual range of the youngsters. The only group to venture into more ambitious territory outside the realm of actual experience was Howard University with *Tale of Three Cities,* and the failure to communicate was immediately apparent. Director Erika Thimey is probably to blame for this fundamental error in judgment.

Bennington College under the direction of Martha Hill showed a suprising degree of sophistication both in thematic

British Combine
Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes rehearse at Sadler's Wells for "Symphonic Variations."

material and staging. And the University of Pennsylvania under Malvena Taiz carried off top honors for energy and spontaneity. D. H.

Ballet in London

This season of French ballet has been of exceptional interest to Londoners after their long isolation from any but English ballet. Yet, placed in any context, it would be the most stimulating and exciting experience we have had for a long time.

In his introduction to the company's souvenir program, Jean Cocteau suggests that this group of young dancers may emerge as a phoenix arising from the ashes of the Diaghileff Ballet—and it is no wild claim. The artistic direction of Boris Kochno, presiding over the choreographic inspiration of Roland Petit and Janine Charrat and the collaboration of composers like Stravinsky, Sauget and Ibert, artists like Laurencin, Hugo, Roy and Berard, has built this young company (it has been in existence less than a year) into a vital force which may be of the utmost importance to the whole future of ballet.

On all counts Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées show real balletic achievement. Its decorative standard is high; its repertory varied and powerful and Roland Petit in particular (at twenty-one) shows a wealth of inventive power. Its musical scores range from the dry mastery of Stravinsky's *Jeux de Cartes* to Sauget's sentimental circus-music parody for *Les Forains*. Its dancers are superb products of the incomparable Paris schools and among them Irene Skorik, yet a child, will one day be a great ballerina, while Jean Babilee, a boy dancer of extraordinary range and ability, has already entered ballet history with his dancing of the Bluebird variation and *Spectre de la Rose*.

Adam Zero, ballet by Michael Benthal, choreography by Robert Helpmann, music by Arthur Bliss, decor and costumes by Roger Furse, was first produced by Sadler's Wells Ballet, London, April 10.

The theme of this ballet is nothing less than the Life of Man, moving through an endless series of timeless cycles—told "in terms of a company creating a ballet and calling on all the resources of the theatre to do so." Not a particularly clear theme for working out in movement, it would seem, and certainly Helpmann hasn't found a way

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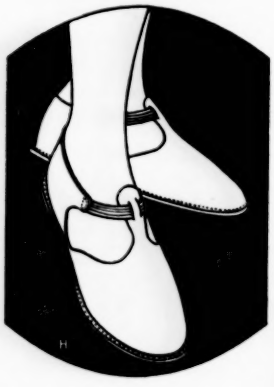

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of doing it. The ballet is dominated by the ballet within it—that is by the stage-setting, floating scenery and make-up which goes on before our eyes. Adam Zero (Helpmann) is ineffective against this background and the Covent Garden stage equipment beats the dancer hands down. There is a beatuiful performance by June Brae as Adam's mother, first love, wife, mistress, and finally Death, and David Paltenghi gives a nicely balanced study of the stage-manager-cum-controller-of-the-universe.

Symphonic Variations, ballet by Frederick Ashton, music by Cesar Franck, decor and costumes by Sophie Fedorovitch was first produced by Sadler's Wells Company, London, April 24, 1946.

Symphonic Variations is Ashton's first work since his release from the Royal Air Force and suggests that his creative ability has, if anything, been enriched by his absence from ballet. The work is intended for just six dancers (who are on stage throughout) and is concerned only with the creation of lyrical, seemingly effortless, and exquisitely beautiful movement. Like *Les Sylphides, Symphonic Variations* creates a mood and leaves the spectator to draw therefrom his own enrichment. Sophie Fedorovitch's backcloth is a clear light green, lined with black, and her costumes for the three girls are white tights with the briefest and simplest of white tunics, while the men are also in white, their blouses decorated with black designs.

The performances of Fonteyn, May, Shearer and Somes, Shaw and Danton are completely loyal to Ashton's conception. While all give of their best, none attempts to outshine the others so that the fusion of all the elements comprising the ballet is complete. M. C.

Ballet in Paris

In Paris, Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, under the guidance of Boris Kochno and Roland Petit, continues to eclipse the Opera ballet in the news. A number of new works have recently enriched its repertory and the personnel has been greatly strengthened by the addition of Mlle. Solange Schwarz, for many years one of the attractions of the Opera troupe.

New ballets of note produced the past few months by this group are *Les Amours de Jupiter, Concert de Danses* (to Tchaikowsky's Mozartiana score, known in America to Balanchine's sensi-

tive and brilliant choreography), *La Fiancée du Diable* (in the best Romantic tradition of the eerie), a Spanish number, *Los Caprichos,* and a Commedia dell' Arte conceit, *Les Forains.*

A divertissement, *La Foret,* offers selections from Tchaikowsky's "Sleeping Beauty" and *Spectre de la Rose* makes a bow to Diaghileff and Fokine.

Of the new offerings, *Les Amours de Jupiter* and the *Concert de Danses* appear to be the most arresting. The first is costumed severely in tights (after the fashion of Massine's *Rouge et Noire*), with only a scarf, a casque, or the like to distinguish the character impersonated. The tale is none too clearly told and the scenic effects are sometimes crude. In spots the dance is characterized by a disconcerting vulgarity.

The *Concert de Danses* offers a stage within a stage, to serve a double action and two dance moods and manners. Here the ancient dancing of the Court Ballet, slow, noble, reserved, in the ample costumes, the great hoops and paniers, of the *ancien regime,* alternates by way of contrast with the streamlined acrobacies of the Folies Bergeres, or the Bal Tabarin, amidst a rococo decor equipped with a flamboyant float recalling the Court Spectacles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The dancing throughout has been highly praised, especially the work of Mlle. Schwarz.

It would appear that this venture in ballet has its eye on the touring "Russian" companies of the past decade or so and also wishes to make capital of the art from every angle. It calls upon the ancient, the classic and neo-classic, the romantic, and the modern, and mixes them all on occasion. In doing so, it is not always successful, but the result is a varied and stimulating experiment.

G. C.

Russian Opera Ballet

Announcements of the Sadler's Wells opening at Covent Garden with *The Sleeping Princess* were glowing, but no such praise can be bestowed upon the Russian Grand Opera and Ballet Company's production of *La Belle aux Bois Dormant* April 28th and May 3rd at the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House. Lavishly costumed and mounted, and starring Vera Nemtchinova supported by Paul Petroff, *Beauty* was a signal failure. Mme. Nemtchinova's dancing was one of the few redeeming features. Petroff ably assisted in the pas

(*continued on page* 56)

BRITAIN'S FIRST NEGRO BALLET

British Combine

Scene from the Ballets Negres production "They Came" at the Twentieth Century Theatre in London. Berto Pasuka is the Witch Doctor (center) and Patricia Clover the nurse.

Berto Pasuka presents London with an all-native West Indian program

LONDON now has its first Negro ballet. It is headed by a talented young Jamaican dancer, Berto Pasuka, and a handful of young Europeans who believe that art is international and should know neither race nor creed. The result is "The Ballets Negres," which is now presenting four ballets for a short season at the redecorated Twentieth Century Theatre. All are based on native West Indian fables or characters, and were choreographed by Pasuka who also dances the leading roles.

"The idea," says Pasuka, "is not to emulate classical ballet, but to develop our own Negro dance with its own technique. We need to discipline the primitive."

Of the four ballets, "De Prophet" tells of a fanatical preacher who tries to fly to heaven by building himself a pair of wings, with his efforts ending in disaster. "They Came" is the story, in dance terms, of the first contact between native and European in Africa. "Market Day" is a light-hearted, colorful number about life in a market town, while "Aggrey" tells of the life of the great African philosopher and educationalist in a one-act ballet.

Pasuka had dreamed of presenting London with a Negro dance theatre ever since he came to England from his native West Indies several years ago. But, despite the success he had known in his own country, he realized the need for disciplining his native art, and began to study classical ballet. Today, associated with him in his new enterprise, are Leonard Salzedo, a young composer formerly with the Ballet Guild; Patricia Cliver, who dances some of the few white roles and acts as stage director; Roy Hobdell, who earns his living as a commercial artist and devotes his spare time to ballet decor; and Ernest Berk, a German refugee, who designs the costumes.

Pasuka wants to expand his company in the future. "We want others to join us—writers, musicians, dancers and choreographers," he says. "There is a great deal of Negro talent being neglected in Britain and we hope that this first small effort of ours will show the way to others."

ETHEL FISHER

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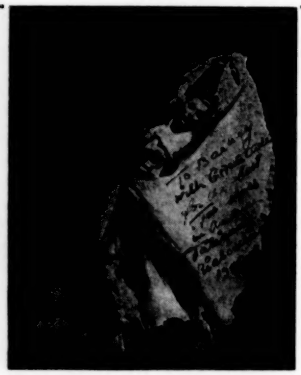

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de deux and danced the Bluebird. The only other finished performances were given by Jeanne Taylor (the Wicked Fairy) and Bette Jean Gerlach (the Lilac Fairy). Anatole Oboukhoff directed Mme. Nemtchinova and Petroff in Petipa's traditional dances. Evelyn Wenger was responsible for the rest of the choreography, such as it was.

Prince Igor, presented for two performances by the company this year for the third time, does not improve with the years. Eugene Plotnikoff conducted a huge orchestra through a lovely score inadequately sung and danced by amateur groups.

As in the past, it seems as if all the resources of the Russian Grand Opera and Ballet have been invested in costumes, decor and orchestra with the result that actual performances (and that is what, after all, the cash customers come to see) suffer. San Francisco has the necessary talent, both singers and dancers, for proper ballet presentation. These performances do little to embellish the local dance scene.

R. T.

Dance in Montreal

Morenoff climaxed the spring recitals in Montreal by a new production of his Ballet Music-Hall, in its nineteenth edition. It proved to have many elements

Ethel Lieberman

Ethel Lieberman

of a professional ballet company, with three completely new works.

Scenes of Egyptian Antiquity was a surprising blend of allegorical dancing in a pseudo-Oriental style with excerpts from both the sacred and profane repertory. The score was specially commissioned from Henri Miro, resident Canadian composer, and was the triumph of the evening. A few dancing poses were credited to Frances Oliver, Morenoff's choreography was theatrically effective and intellectually stimulating.

Set to music of Mendelssohn, *A Man's Steps Across His Life* was a pointed panorama of the cycle of a human life, marred only by occasional long-windedness. There was in particular a glorification of the role of the student, in keeping with the state's attitude and the coinciding youth week throughout the province.

Divertissements grouped under the title *Vaudeville* displayed contrasting qualities, but the result was another demonstration that Morenoff is capable of developing, largely out of amateur material, a professional production which is both entertaining and provocative.

F. A. C.

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Footnotes

a tome on terpsichore; A. Murray in a hurry

A comprehensive communique could be compiled daily from ballet rumors alone. But try to obtain one fact about ballet, and no one in the business knows anything. A ballet production can be in rehearsal for two weeks, but the managing office professes complete ignorance of it. Every member of a company on tour knows the casting of a new work, but the publicity staff at headquarters denies the existence of those people under contract. Try to ascertain the dates of an itinerary and you are told they haven't been settled yet (and bookings are supposed to be an advance business). Ask a leading question and you get three answers, each different, with a plea, "This is not for publication."

And who screams the loudest when you fail to mention the ballet? That's right . . . ballet managements.

Nearly every walk of artistic life has been successfully recorded in the literature and drama of the world, but dance fiction occupies the least space of all. The field is not intrinsically poor: there are enough fabulous personalities and plots for a five-foot shelf. Lady Eleanor Smith's novel, Ballerina, is one of the few well-devised, well-written works. The latest attempt at dance fiction is Raya Keen's She Shall Have Music, but it hardly ranks as good dance or good fiction. With a chance to give us Stage Door of dance literature, Miss Keen has authored, instead, a shallow story of shallow people.

In a recent newspaper interview, Marina Svetlova of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet told all about backstage rivalries between ballerinas, drawing upon her own experiences suffered during a stay with one of the companies. " 'One time,' she recalled, 'someone put tiny slivers of glass in the toes of my slippers.' When she went out on stage the pain was so penetrating (she grimaced in remembrance) that she fell to the floor. . . . Another time, her ballet slippers were spliced in the center so that they fell apart on the stage." It's a smart dancer who can don her ballet slippers so fast and still correctly without noticing these little things until she is on stage. One explanation may be, too, that Svetlova warms up in her bare feet!

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Ruthella Wade

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